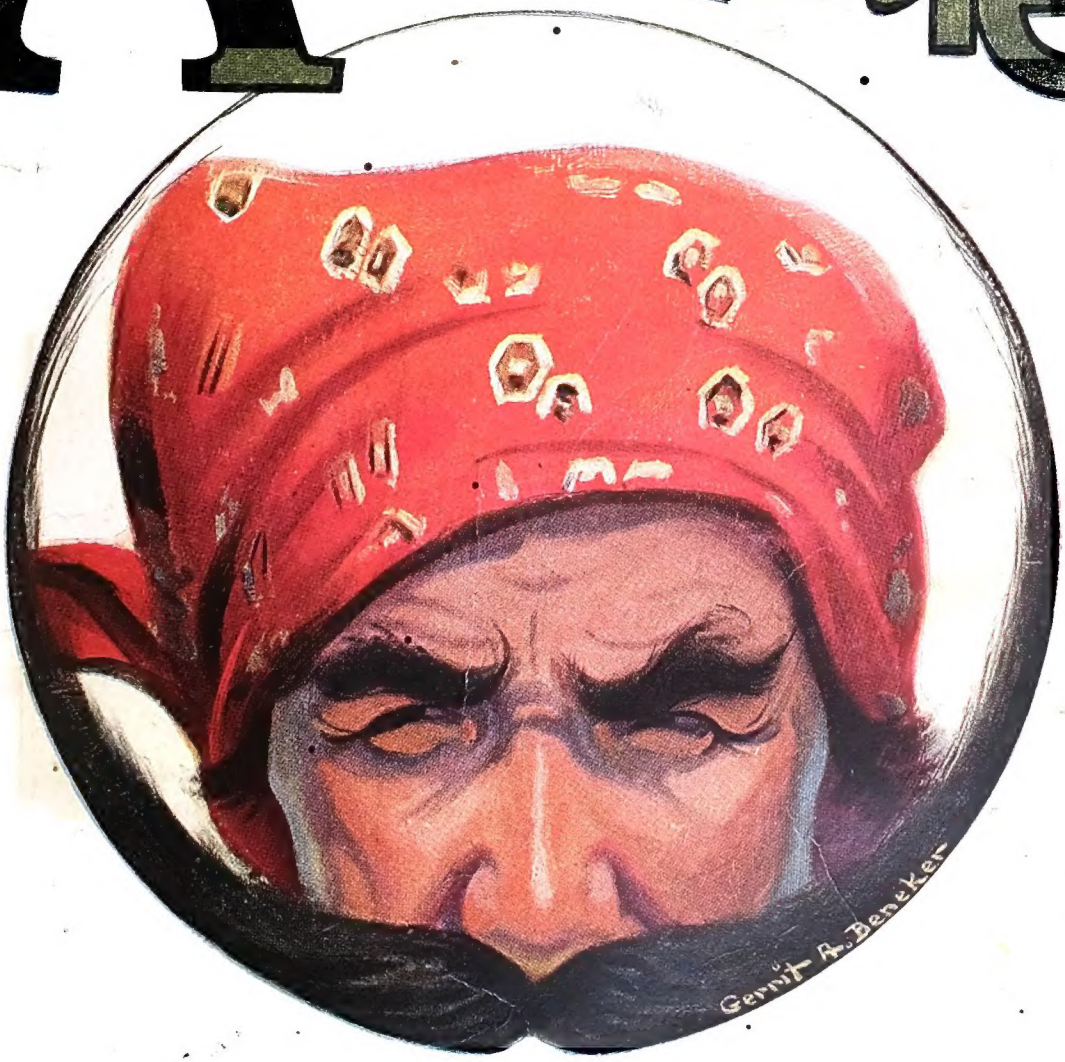
SEPTEMBER

15 CENTS

Adventure



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yright, 1913 (Trade-Mark Registered), by THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, PUBLISHERS OF EVERYBODY'S MAGA

A True Story of Adventure

IN the course of human events we found ourselves in our dentist's chair the other day. Our dentist, by the way, is a conservative, gentlemanly Canadian skirting along the edge of life's prime.

After our usual conversational preliminaries, the subject of magazines cropped up and blissfully unaware of our connection with this publication our dentist friend said: "Do you know, there's a magazine I get every month that prints, by all odds, the most entertaining stories I've been able to find in any magazine. It's only 15c and I don't know how they do it, for it hasn't any advertising pages. It's called ADVENTURE. (Right here we nearly had our tooth injured for life trying to smile.) It is so different from the usual run of story-magazines. It isn't sensational, yet it's exciting. Its stories are well-written and they all seem to have just that degree of unexpectedness that a magazine called ADVENTURE should have. Do you know the publication at all?"

We modestly confessed we knew the publication and that it was all that the doctor had stated and then some.

ADVENTURE *is* different. It *does* contain just that element that leads you to expect the unexpected in its pages.

In the October issue the headliner is a 40,000-word complete novel by Hulbert Footner called "At Mile Ninety-Two." It's one of those gripping Northwest Mounted Police stories with the tingle of action-in-the-open in every chapter.

Just the kind of well-written, real man's story our Canadian Doctor will revel in. Many other mighty good things as well.

Adventure

FOR OCTOBER

15c a Copy ***All News-stands***

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Arthur Sullivant Hoffman
MANAGING EDITOR

Volume 6
Number 5

ADVENTURE

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE.—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with any old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name if possible. All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right, in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relatives Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada.

ADDRESS wanted by shipmate of Frank (?) Montieth, who was mate of the four-masted bark *William P. Frye* when she sailed on her maiden voyage, December, 1902, New York to Shanghai. —Address, W. H. DAVIS, Chico, New Mexico.

CAN anybody give me information that will lead to the whereabouts of J. W. McKenzie who is a hospital apprentice in the U. S. Navy at the present time? The reason I ask this favor is because he is a brave young man and because he saved the lives of my wife and daughter in Peking, China, during the rebellion last year, at the risk of his own. The last I saw of him was when he left Peking for the Philippines. I will send the informant a check and also my thanks if he will be kind enough to send me that young man's address, and his description. If McKenzie reads this himself he will save you this trouble and also be compensated for his brave act—which it was to me if not to him.—Address, C. J. CALHOUN, 1312 Fourteenth Street, San Francisco, Calif.

NOT being sure of the spelling of one name asked for in the following, we have queried it, so that the man in question will not be thrown off the scent:

Would like to hear from Frank Miller, John Cramford and Lee Cramford, who lived in Ennis, Texas, in Spring and Summer of 1892. I would like to hear from Private William Harson [?], 2nd Bat. 1st Scots Guards. The last time I heard from him he was at Picquet Barracks, London S. W.—Address, HARVEY MORRIS, Co. D, 22nd Inf., Texas City, Tex.

WOULD Thomas J. Kelly, last heard of in Co. F, 9th Infantry, in 1905, and also ex-prize-fighter, please write to Joseph R. Brandamour. Very important.—Address at Cornelia Street, Plattsburg, N. Y.

IF IN your "Lost Trails" you can get in touch with some of my old comrades I would much like to hear from T. S. M. Cottrell, Corp. McEwen, Trooper Cooper, Sergt. Dacombe of B Troop, M. M. P. Rhodesian Campaign of 1896-97. Also of Capt. Nesbitt, V. C., who took over command of B Troop, and any others who were with us at Hartley Hill, Fort Martin, Fort Retreat and around Mashiangombi's Kraal in '96-'97.

My experience is as follows: Served in London Rifle Brigade Cadet Corps, then in 2nd Middlesex Artillery, also 4th Royal West Surrey Mounted detachment, went to British Columbia 1892 farming. Went to Alaska trading in 1893, Arctic expedition relief of the whalers in 1894 and on that trip went as far north and east as mouth of Mackenzie. South Africa 1895, and was one of body-guard to Col. Frank Rhodes at time of Jamieson Raid. Matabele 1896, Mashonaland 1897 in B. M. M. P. and B. S. A. P. Klondike in 1898, '99, 1900. South Africa again in 1901 at tail end of war. Then Australia, Fiji Islands, and now back in British Columbia working as a contractor of railroad bridges.—Address, M. M. MARSDEN, Ex. Corp. M. M. P., 875 14th Avenue, West, Vancouver, B. C., Can.

HOWARD IRWIN, who sailed from Frisco on the *Maitai*, May 31, 1911, please write CHAS. C. HARVEY, Shoshoni, Wyoming.

NEWS wanted of "Frisco Pete," who with writer left San Francisco for Indianapolis in September, 1912, stopping off at Sparks, Nev. Last heard of in Ontario.—Address, No. 69.

WOULD like to find one Gulliver, who was building a railway in Iquique, Chile, in 1898. I gave him all the verse I had on hand; one of which told my sad life, the end of each verse describing my then (and now) condition:

Without an anchor to stay or check
Where the sullen breakers roar,
I'm a drifting, mastless, rudderless wreck,
In a gale on a dead lee shore.

S. B. H. HURST.

WISH to hear from Jesse E. Sherick, known as "Pat," who served in U. S. Army in Alaska, Cuba and the Philippines, and the last I heard of him was in Company I, 14th Infantry, Cebu, Cebu, Philippine Islands. This was in 1909.—Address, PAUL CONNER, Howard, Kans.

JACK BONHAM, born at Hastings, England; enlisted about 1900 (aged fifteen) and served six years in band of the Royal Sussex; to Sherbrooke, P. Q., Canada, with two other young men, sailing from London, March, 1906; last heard from Aug., 1906, with photo in uniform of Sherbrooke Volunteers; natural musician; favorite with his comrades. Any one having word of him please communicate at once with Mrs. Jean Bonham, care ADVENTURE.

(Continued on page 224)

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Adventure
Registered in the United States Patent Office
Sept 1913 Vol. 6 No. 5

The Letter of his Orders

by Talbot Mundy

CHAPTER I

"THE TOAD BENEATH THE HARROW KNOWS PRECISELY WHERE EACH PICKET GOES."

PESHAWUR, baking and dazzling in the sunshine, and reflecting back the shimmer of it to the silent, snow-topped hills, reverberated, too, to the clatter and confusion of a campaign under way. From Peshawur the road leads northward and westward through the Khaibar Pass, and up that road one Bobs Bahadur was leading more than sixty thousand men to Kabul and Kandahar. The mess that an army of that size leaves behind it is worse to look at, and worse to handle, than the ugly job in front, and the men who are obliged to stay behind and tidy things are a morose band.

Peshawur, just then, was no exception. There were little belated subdivisions, collecting together eagerly, wild to press northwestward, and mad-angry at each fresh enforced delay. These made no secret of their discontent. There were wounded men already—scores of them—and sick men; and there were other men again who had been sent back in charge of "details for the base." These latter were entirely at a loss to understand why they did not at once start back again. But under Bobs Bahadur the campaign failures were detected early, and dealt with promptly, even if he did have no power to muzzle them when they had reached Peshawur.

And there were certain good grim-jawed gluttons for the game-in-hand—tried-out and tested veterans of previous campaigns—who would have given their eyes for just one view of Kabul, one real scrap. "Just one, old man, just one, and I wouldn't grumble! Hot lead and cold steel at the break o' day, and Tommy Atkins really down to business. Can't you imagine it? But look at this. What a contrast, eh?"

But, the point was that they did the work and did it well. The stores and the remounts and the field-hospital supplies and ammunition went rolling up the Khaibar in mile-long thundering columns, and none of them came thundering down again. They reached the scene of operations as they were needed, and in the proper order; and they were consumed without thought or thanks for the men who sent them there.

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AND there were seven men who were scarcely at all in evidence, but who mattered very much indeed. Those in Peshawur who had a grievance spoke of them as "They, double-blank 'em!" The natives referred to them, and addressed them, as "burrha-sahib." And subalterns and such scarcely ever dared to speak to them at all. They wore civilian clothes, and rather worried looks; and they said nothing that was committal or important or even interesting, in striking contrast to the subalterns and juniors, who knew it all, and knew it differently each morning.

These seven elderly, uninteresting gentlemen would meet from time to time in the official bungalow of the senior of them. And, since he was none other than her Majesty's Commissioner, he took the chair —which is to say that they sat around him in any attitude they chose, and put their feet on his desk if they wanted to, and lit cigars and loosed their cummerbunds. And, as a rule, they discussed many things, from many different points of view, arguing them without rancor, and with no more heat than was due to the Indian temperature.

But there came a morning, when the war was some three months old, on which the senior of them sent an unexpected and urgent "whip." One responded to it in a rickshaw, another walked, a third rode a fat pony that was as well-known as its rider, and yet another of them—who had not yet quite forgotten the day when he could ride or drive in rings round any man in India—drove tandem at a clip that would have brought out the police reserves in any other country. Each man chose a different means of getting there, each started off in a different direction and not one of them arrived within ten minutes of the others. They might have had to answer questions, otherwise.

"ARE we all here?" asked the Commissioner, wiping the perspiration off his face.

"Unless you've sent for Cornock?"

"No. Don't want him. This is not a military case in any present sense of the word. There's a letter from the Viceroy, marked confidential. There are only parts of it that I can read to you. Here's the gist of it."

They lit cigars, and settled down to listen, each man in the attitude that best helped him to concentrate his thoughts.

"It's about the Pathan country."

"——!" said the Treasurer. "That means expenditure. We haven't any money —not an anna. We've sliced and carved at every single appropriation until there isn't one left that we could shave the price of a cheroot from!"

"Suppose we listen to the problem first?" suggested the Commissioner. "Ways and means might come afterward."

"Go ahead," said the Treasurer, wearily. "I'm ways and means. I always come last. We've got no money."

"The Viceroy wants us to send an officer — a civil officer of course — to Sikaram. There's trouble brewing up there."

"Sikaram? That's the Orakzai Pathan district, isn't it? They'd murder anything less offensive than an army corps!"

"His Excellency disagrees with that point of view. He thinks that the Pathans would fight if we sent any kind of armed force, but that a civil officer might contrive to keep the peace."

"Well, what's the nature of the trouble?"

"The trouble's briefly this. The Orakzai Pathans, and possibly two other tribes, the Zaimukhts and Khamkannis, are thinking about taking up arms on the side of the Afghans. It's only talk so far, but it may come to a head at any minute. They're on the flank of our army, and they're much too close to make things comfortable. They could close the Khaibar Pass almost at any minute."

"Secret-service men been working?"

"Yes."

The man whose feet were on the desk, and whose big black Trichinopoli cigar was sending huge rings ceilingward, crumpled up a piece of paper and tossed it from him, and brought his feet down to the floor with a thud.

"If I could have my way," he said irritably, "we'd send Roberts on a little farther than Kabul. Everybody knows who egged on the Afghans and started this war. Everybody knows who it is that's been intriguing on our northern frontier for years. What's the use of blinking things, or jibbing at expenditure? Why, if Russia——"

"Russia is not the point under discussion," said the senior. "The Home Government doesn't want the slightest suspicion even of a misunderstanding with Russia."

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"I know it doesn't! The Home Government wants us to hold India, and pacify frontier savages without the use of troops, and obey orders from Whitehall, and spend nothing beyond the niggardly estimates, and hold Russia in check without the vestige of a diplomatic backing—wants us to play the part of Providence, in fact, and play it better than Providence ever even tried to! After it's all over, we're to take the blame and grin."

"Criticism of the Home Government won't lead us anywhere," said the tired-looking veteran who had called the meeting. "The fact is that, strategically speaking, we have absolutely got to occupy and hold Pathan country, unless we want the army in Afghanistan to be liable to flank-attack at any time. And we've got to use diplomatic methods if we can manage it that way, because of the expense of sending up an expedition. The Viceroy particularly emphasizes his wish that the border-tribes should be brought within our administration without the use of any military expenditure that can be possibly avoided."

"Same old story. Increase the tale of bricks, and hang the straw. Straw's all gone—bricks wanted in a hurry. Rush!"

"Well, that's the reason why I didn't summon Cornock to this meeting. We don't want military counsel."

"Seems to me we don't want anybody's counsel. Seems we've got our orders," said a man sitting near the window. "We've got to murder somebody. We've got to send him up to Sikaram without an escort —*with* orders and *without* backing—and trust to luck!"

"Luck and the secret-service men," said the Commissioner, taking off his gold-rimmed *pince-nez*, and wiping them a little wearily. "His Excellency has ordered an unofficial but very thorough fine-tooth combing of that hill-country. It's under way at present. No news yet, but there's something rather more than merely discontent the matter up there. The secret-service men are to report direct to me."

"Well, what's the use of arguing? We've got our orders. All we've got to do, apparently, is choose the man. Better pick out some one who isn't any use. Pick one of Roberts's discards. He's sent a host back from the front. No sense in killing off a good man."

"We want the best man we can find!" said the Commissioner. "That the chief point on which I need advice this morning."

A DOZEN names were mooted in a minute, but at most of them the senior shook his head.

"Garvis is much too intemperate," he answered. "Loses his temper at the least thing—too fond of whipping his servants, too. No. Hammond won't do either; gets fever and puts in for sick-leave before he's even three-parts dead! Joyce made a mess of that Lindhangha business, you'll remember. Hasn't finished yet preaching about hard luck. Ah! That sounds better! How about Rodrick, now?"

"Isn't he a trifle inexperienced?"

"Maybe. Anybody know a better man?"

"Does he know Pushtu?"

The Commissioner picked up a blue-book, and ran through the pages of it.

"Yes. Passed at the last exam but one."

"He's a decent young fellow."

"Steady as a house."

"He handled his end of that Kashmir Commission business very creditably. Wasn't serious, of course, but he held down his end."

"Tell you another thing young Rodrick did. He kept his temper twice, when I blamed him for what I found out afterward was some one else's fault. Didn't squeal."

"They're rare, that breed. Better keep him down here, then. No sense in killing off a youngster who can sweat his temper!"

"Oh, let's give him the chance."

"I'd wait till we've got a real chance for a man of his stamp."

"Gentlemen," said the Commissioner, shifting restlessly, "without going too deeply into the confidential details of his Excellency's letter, let me assure you that I believe this is a real chance. If none of you can propose a better man, then my vote is for young Rodrick."

"I've no objection."

"I've none."

"Nor've I."

"Anybody object? No? Then it's Rodrick. I'll send for him this afternoon, and give him his instructions. His orders will be, of course, to keep the peace."

"Will he know that the secret-service men are working with him?" asked one of the council-members.

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"Of course not! Why should he? Did any of you ever know who was a secret-service man and who was not? Did any of you ever know how the reports filtered in that got you your promotion over the heads of other men? Nor did I. We'll make no exception in young Rodrick's case. He'll get orders to keep the peace, and keep his temper."

"I don't envy young Rodrick!"

"Neither do I," said the Commissioner. "At least, I'm not sure that I do. But then, there were people who didn't envy me when I got my first difficult post."

"Any other business?"

"None at present. Meet you all at the club to-night? Very good, then. Anybody join me in a rubber? Good. So long till to-night, then."

They filtered out one by one at short intervals, and the Commissioner wrote a six-line note, and addressed it to S. F. Rodrick, and despatched it by the orderly. Then he sat back and wiped the perspiration from his face before attacking a tremendous pile of correspondence.

"Gad!" he muttered. "There used to be a good time, once, when I thought I'd like to be Commissioner. I did, by Gad! I remember it. Thought it'd be good fun to shape out a border-policy, and see it executed. Didn't realize how I'd be crabbed and headed off at every turn. A porcupine would make easier handling. Russia—Afghanistan—a dozen border-tribes—famine—dacoity—war, and all that that means—jealousy—six men to get along with who all think they're better men than I am—strict orders, just when I don't want 'em, from the Viceroy and Council—a native press that is nothing if not venomous—Parliament at home asking questions and getting nasty about expenditure—every single last department howling for more money, and the Treasurer hinting at early suicide—and the Home newspapers calling me—by name, mind you!—'an arbitrary despot, left high on the beach of authority by the receding tide of bureaucratic favor!' It's a veritable bed of roses! What'll be the end of it, I wonder? A K.C.M.G., or oblivion?"

He sat forward again, and drew a basketful of papers to him, and wrote hard for fifteen minutes. Then he sat back and wiped his glasses once again.

"Orderly back yet?" he shouted.

The door opened, and the man saluted.

"Go down to my quarters, please, and ask my servant for another bottle of quinine. I find that this one here is empty. Hurry, will you."

CHAPTER II

"FAIR IS OUR LOT, OH, GOODLY IS OUR HERITAGE!"

WHEN all is said and done, there are not so very many incidents that stand out like beacons in the life of any man. The day he wins his woman, the day he marries her, the day that his pony wins a race, perhaps. There is no knowing just what constitute the star events in any given man's career, unless, by some chance or other, you can get the man to tell you, and be sure that he is not lying to you. Even the best men lie, and not always without intention, on a point of that kind.

The men who have the picking of the destined-to-command watch three things, when they have marked down a possibility. They watch how he works when he believes that no one watches him and, if they get the opportunity, they watch how he holds his chin and sweats his temper under the strain of a reverse. But, since that opportunity comes oftenest and, since they know that his first appointment to a lone command is surely a landmark in the life of any man worth watching, they observe him on that occasion with a minuteness of attention that would embarrass him extremely it he were aware of it.

They compare his behavior with that of themselves and other men on similar occasions and, being merely human, they base their faith in him, or else their unbelief, on what they see.

More than one man, more than a thousand men, have gone off to their new commands foredoomed to failure for no other reason than because the men who chose them saw them smirk or fret or play the fool under the excitement of the unexpected summons of Dame Fortune. They have started without the confidence of their superiors, and at the first faint signs of failure they have been recalled. In the same way, many a mediocre man has won his way and held it because the men who watched him either could not read what

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happened to be passing in his mind, or read it wrong.

There could be no doubt for a moment about Rodrick, though. He was quite evidently not a mediocre man, and just as evidently he appreciated to the full the difficulty of the task that lay ahead of him. The Commissioner found that much out at the afternoon interview, when Rodrick called in answer to the note.

The orderly had found him close enough at hand. He was supposed to be momentarily unattached to any Government-department; fresh back from helping to administer a famine-district, with leave to rest himself and loaf for a day or two until three more men's work should be assigned to him. So he had lent himself to Courtley Bingham. And a man who dared do that, dared anything, for Bingham was a man whose creed included working any man who came within his clutches to the scientific, squeezed-out, calculated limit. Bingham was just then responsible for the army's food-trains, and neither did the army starve nor Bingham and his helpers rest.

NOT more than ten minutes after Rodrick had entered the Commissioner's office, and some time before the Commissioner had quite made up his mind how much authority to place in Rodrick's hands, a note came from Courtley Bingham—scrawled hastily on a blue indent-form, and twisted up.

"That's right," it ran. "Take away the only godsend that I've had on this campaign. I suppose you're going to waste him on some job where he can sleep ten hours a day."

The Commissioner frowned, to hide a smile. He knew Courtley Bingham's way of recommending men.

"What have you been doing for the past few days?" he asked. "You were supposed to be resting, weren't you?"

"It seemed to me that a complete change was what I wanted, sir, more than rest."

"What have you been doing?"

"Helping Colonel Bingham, sir."

"Um-m-m! Did a provision-train start for the front this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"At what time?"

"Eight o'clock, sir."

"Then—ah—did you get any sleep last night?"

"Not last night, sir."

"You had some notion, I suppose, of applying for a transfer to the seat of war?"

"No, sir; none whatever. It's the political end that appeals to me."

"Then—ah—why try to kill yourself by getting in Bingham's way?"

"I don't feel noticeably dead, sir. No one else seemed to want me for the moment, and I didn't think—I didn't think that Colonel Bingham minded. He seemed even rather pleased."

"Well. Perhaps he was. A point, though, that I want to make clear to you is this. On this new mission on which I'm sending you, you're going to gain nothing by being overenergetic. I've chosen you because you happened to be the only man available. You're a bit young for the post, and a bit inexperienced, and sometimes I think you're apt to be a little too enthusiastic. Bear that in mind, now. You're going without any escort up to Sikaram, and you'll be in touch with me only about once a week, by runner. You're going into a country that is hostile and suspicious, and among tribes that are as treacherous as anything that breathes.

"Your duty will be, principally, to familiarize the Orakzai Pathans with the idea of having a white official in their midst, and to collect information that will be likely to prove useful later on when we really begin to take that country properly in hand. You are not on any account to force any kind of issue on any point at all, and above all you are not to get yourself killed. That, of course, would mean reprisals on our part, which we are not in a position to afford at present. Do you understand me?"

"So far, yes, sir."

"Very well. You will take with you three or four carpenters, because there will be no labor available up there, and you'd better build a house of some kind after you have got the head-man's permission. Be sure and get his permission first, though. You'll have to have a considerable string of porters, and I'll see that you are supplied with a number of gifts for the local headmen, so that you'll have every chance of ingratiating yourself with them at the beginning. Then, you'll need an interpreter. Oh, yes, I know you understand Pushtu, but there are at least a dozen dialects of it spoken close to Sikaram, and I'll send a baboo with you."

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"Why the baboo, sir?"

"Oh, very largely because it's usual. It will do something toward increasing the apparent dignity of your position, and the baboo will be able to save you some detail-work by taking charge of your stores."

"Couldn't I——"

"I wish the baboo to go with you."

"Very well, sir."

"Now, remember this. You're going there to preserve the peace, not break it. Your own ideas of what is right or wrong are not to weigh with you. Nothing is to influence you except the letter of your orders—'Keep the peace!' You are to take no notice of intertribal matters, and shut your eyes to any kind of insubordination short of absolute attack, and you're to rule your own men with a rod of iron. Don't let them get into trouble with the natives, mind. To help you in that, I've decided to give you Second-Class Magistrate's powers, instead of Third-Class, as I at first intended. But understand me, that is only to help you with your own men."

"Thank you, sir."

"I want you to start in two days' time, and hurry up there as fast as you can travel. Take a large supply of medicines with you—six months' supply of food for yourself and your men, as many servants as you think you'll need, but not more than you'll need, and don't come back until you're sent for. Don't hoist the British flag even, until you're positive that it will not cause resentment. But occupy the district technically in every way you can, without creating the impression among the natives that you are doing anything of the kind. You've got a difficult task in front of you."

"So it seems, sir."

"And by no means a pleasant one."

"I think it's likely to prove very interesting, sir."

"The consequences might be interesting —to yourself—if it turned out that you appreciate the letter, and perhaps the spirit, of your orders. Well, make out your indents, and get ready. I'll assign you a baboo and an interpreter. You'd better see about all the other men yourself, and, ah, I suppose I'll see you at the club tonight? If any other point occurs to me, I'll speak to you about it then. Good afternoon."

THERE were six men watching Rodrick that evening at the club; not all at the same time, and not even all the time, but more carefully and with more deadly understanding than trained police detectives frequently apply to a suspect. They found him modest still, in spite of the quiet undercurrent of elation that made his gray eyes sparkle.

"What's the new job? Where is it?" asked half a dozen men of his own age, who were playing pool, and who were ready to be jealous or pitying or scornful as the case might be.

"I don't know yet, exactly. Waiting still for further orders."

"Anything out of the ordinary?"

"No. Likely to be very humdrum."

"Nothing up at the front, then?"

"No. No such luck. Some out-of-the-way station or other."

"Poor old chap! That relegates *you* to oblivion, anyhow! Hear that, you men? Rodrick's got a siding. One more space clear in front. One man less between us and the real thing."

"Poor old Rodrick!"

There was a world of sympathy forthcoming for him, and they offered him drinks to solace him. But he seemed disinclined to drink. And he excused himself from playing pool on the ground that he had not slept the night before.

"The poor devil's homesick, I'll bet you!" whispered a knowing junior, who had had one year's experience of outside district-work, and who prided himself on having secured a transfer.

But Pelham, of the High Court, who had spent his life in judging men under every possible condition, diagnosed the symptoms rather differently. He drew Rodrick over to a corner of the club, gave him a cigar and offered him encouragement.

"It won't be quite so deadly monotonous or unproductive of results as you may imagine," he told him.

Rodrick looked him squarely in the face, and then he noticed, for he could not help it, the quiet elation that had charge of him.

"You're maybe luckier than you think."

"I imagine not, sir. If I could have chosen my job, I'd have chosen this one. If I'd been given my choice between this and, say, a political appointment at the front, I'd have chosen what I've got now.

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If it interests you to know how I feel, sir, I think I'm the luckiest, dog-luckiest, best-satisfied cuss in Anglo-India!"

"That *is* rather interesting," said Pelham. "But don't let your enthusiasm run away with you."

Pelham strolled over to the table where the Commissioner and three others of his council were playing whist. He bent over the Commissioner while the cards were being dealt, and the Commissioner looked up at him.

"I think he'll do," he whispered.

"I know he'll do!" said the Commissioner. "I had a talk with him this afternoon."

And, while the know-it-all subordinates around the billiard-tables and the bar discussed him and were duly sorry for him and consigned him to the limbo of the men-who-can-not-rise, the "best-satisfied cuss in Anglo-India" walked off to his bungalow.

Squatting on a trunk, with a packing-case in lieu of table, he wrote a long, long letter home.

"Yes, mother mine," he wrote, and that was the reiterated gist of it, "I've got my chance at last. There's a real man's work in front of me, with no frills to it, and no red tape, and with the eye of the best man in India on me all the time. Now, watch!"

CHAPTER III

"—ET DONA FERENTES"

THE white stones on the sharp brow of the cliff, where every man might see them, had been taken up—the round white stones of covenant that mark the ending of the each-other-shooting season. So long as there were seeds to sow, or when the corn was ripening for the harvest, they stood there in silent testimony of the hillmen's oath of truce. But when the little field-work had been accomplished, then there might be a settlement of blood-feuds. The long jezails came down from their resting-places up amid the thatch, and the stones were borne away.

That is the one oath that the hillman keeps inviolate. When he has sworn that he will kill his man, he has always the mental reservation, due to knowledge, that he may die first, or that some other man, as blood-hungry as himself, may manage to forestall him. All of his other oaths—and they are many—are made for convenience and the sake of argument or emphasis. But that one covenant, that he will keep the peace until the seed is sown or the harvest won, represents for him the absolute, rock-bottom bed of truth.

The stones, then, had been gathered up. There would be no more truth or peace along that zigzag, warring border-land for three long months.

Sikaram, snow-draped and silent, raised his tremendous shoulder to support the heavens, and beside him and around him pile on pile of rock and ravine-reft cliff and devil-hacked escarpment strained, end-upward, to reach his silence and be one with him. And over the shoulder of a wind-swept precipice, lined out in single file for the sake of foot-room and lost to all sense of sound in the hugeness of the silences around them, Rodrick and his column footed it toward the sunset.

He walked at the head of them, and led his horse, for it is no encouragement to weary, load-disheartened men to see their leader ride. Every mule in the little pack-train had had to have his burden lessened for the sake of more agility where the cliff-paths curled above three-thousand-foot ravines. Every porter in the train was bearing nearly double; double-manning the loads at awkward places, and returning to double-man the other half again.

There was a wind to lean against, a snow-cooled wind that waked the slumbering fever. There was a nearly bottomless and echoless ravine behind them. In front there lay a roughly lined-out parallelogram of level ground, flanked at one end by another precipice. It was like a giant's step, hacked by Dame Nature out of Sikaram.

Nothing lived there but kites apparently. Nothing moved and nothing made a sound except the wind, and the wind only added to the silence. And yet there was not a movement of the column but was watched, not a load that they carried but was counted, not an article of clothing that they wore but was appraised, and mentally assigned as loot.

AND, as the end of the weary little column wound, like a sun-drowsy snake's tail, out on the level sward, another column—not so long, and not so

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regularly spaced, but not so weary—swung out at a steel-sprung hillman lope to meet them, emerging from behind a grim black boulder, as though they were the evil spirits of the place.

They looked the part, these Orakzai Pathans. They formed up in a cluster on the level ground, and waited for young Rodrick with the air of men who have yet to determine what they will do with him, but who know that his fate lies in their hands. They were armed, each single one of them, and they carried their jezails as men do who live because they carry them.

Each long-barreled, curved-stocked rifle leaned this way or that, as each man had discovered from experience how he could best bring it into use at half a second's notice. They held their heads high, and their long knives hitched round in front of them with the ready hilt protruding through the opened sheepskin jacket. And they clustered round the man who led them, as men do who would not fear to dispute his leadership, and only fear to let him seem too much their leader.

"Whence come ye?" growled the giant who was spokesman. He stood, hook-nosed and bearded and eagle-eyed, and held back the others with his rifle-barrel and one extended arm. He waited for Rodrick's answer as a judge waits for the pleading of a criminal—incredulous, but tolerant of untruth for the present, and confident of power.

"From Peshawur," answered Rodrick.

"When go ye back again?"

"I don't know yet," said Rodrick.

"What will ye?"

"I have come here to sow the seed of friendship. I bring presents for the head-men."

"The head-men here be many."

"I bring many presents."

"It is good. Let us see the presents."

All Rodrick's preconceived determinations about tact seemed to vanish on the instant before the sting of the fellow's insolence. He would probably have failed on his venture there and then, have given back a hot, indignant answer, couched in straight-worded Anglo-Saxon phraseology and transposed literally into a language that was meant to quarrel in, and then have died just where he stood, had not what some men call Coincidence and others Providence and some men Luck come hot to his assistance.

HE TURNED half-way round, to hide the flush of indignation that mounted to his face. And, as he turned, the point of his hunting-knife, from which the sheath-tip had been scraped off against a cliff-side, pricked his horse. The horse reared suddenly, broke loose, wheeled, plunged, and landed, iron-shod, on the foot of the nearest porter.

The porter sank down on to his load, and gazed at his crimson foot in dumb, bewildered misery. Ten other porters ran, unbidden, to catch the horse again. The watching Orakzai grinned cynically, and no one moved, save Rodrick, to help the porter. He yelled for a baggage-mule.

He had the red-cross-labeled wooden emergency-chest off-loaded in an instant, and in another instant had it open on the ground in front of him. And there, right under the wondering eyes of the Orakzai, he performed a very neat and very certain-fingered piece of surgery.

While he cleaned and stitched and bandaged up the wound there came a change that was almost tangible in the demeanor of the hillmen. They clustered closer, and barely gave him room to show his campaign-learned accomplishment. And before he knew it, in fact, without his knowing it at all, Sigurd Fitzalan Rodrick was removed from the list of men-about-to-die, and transferred to that of men-under-suspended-sentence.

They, to a man, were fighting-men, who could appreciate the art of bandaging and stitching-up, from bitter experience of the lack of it. And, since in their own way they were shrewd men and, as other men do, judged others by the way they would behave themselves, they reasoned instantly that to offend this foreigner at the start, or to ill-treat him, would be no wise way to coax from him further exhibitions of his skill.

There was no need for any signals on the head-man's part. The same thought flashed through all their minds at once.

Their attitude was strangely more deferential when he got up from his knee again and ordered a tent pitched and the porter laid inside it, before again turning to the hillmen. And he, being an adventurer playing for his first big stake, was quick to

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sense the change, although he did not understand it.

"There will be a present-giving, and a durbar, to-morrow or the next day," he told them, "when I and my men have rested."

The head-man actually bowed! He inclined his high-held mountain chin one whole inch down toward his chest, and stepped backward with an almost courtly air.

"Pitch your camp here," he said politely, though the Pushtu of it sounded like abuse to unaccustomed ears. "There, where the scrub is, there is water, and the women of the tribe shall bring you fuel.

"You have my leave to go," he added, and the hillmen went, still clustered all together, and walking quickly with their long, loose hillman strides; saying nothing. They seemed in a hurry to consult, or else to bear the tidings. But, whatever the reason for their hurry, a line of women brought down cut fuel before the sun went under, and piled it in a stack. When the mountain mists crept out to bring bronchitis and the ague and the other ninety-nine complaints that breed where the mists are born, they found the camp well-warmed and dry and comfortable.

But there were other burdens that the women brought, when the fires had all been kindled, and the suppers were all simmering inside the pots. Far into the night, by the light of a patent tent-lamp and with all the skill that he could remember or invent, young Rodrick labored over bullet-wounds and sores and knife-cuts and sore eyes and all the ailments that a villageful of feud-suckled mountaineers could find for him.

His tent was like a field-hospital in time of war. There were bough-built litters coming and others going, and litters laid on the ground outside, and through all the disgusting butcher-work that followed young Rodrick whistled to himself, and smiled with that quiet, half humorous, half pugnacious smile of his.

Sometimes he even hummed a little.

"If I'm to be a poultice-walloper," he muttered, "well and good. I'll be one. They'll suffer most. And if this isn't tact, and doesn't amount to ingratiating myself with the Orakzai Pathans, then I'd like to be told what is!"

BUT up on the hill above, that night, where more than a hundred of the hairy hillmen held council round a log fire in a long low hut of rough-hewn stone, there was a discussion held in fierce-growled Pushtu that would have lessened Rodrick's optimism, had he heard it.

"The wonders in that wonder-box of his are many," said the head-man, "and our sick be many. He can not get away. His servants are not armed. And of what use would the wonders be without the man to manage them?"

There were none who could answer that question.

"Let us hold our hands, then, for a while. We have him—so!—within the hollow of our hand. Let him give us the presents that he brings, and heal our sick for us, and maybe tell us why he comes, and then——"

"But strangers who bring presents, why bring they presents? Does a trader give, or does he bargain? Does a man who has no fear, and no intention to work evil, give when what he has to give is worth a price? Let us take what he brings with him, and divide it."

"Nay!" said another man. "Let him give first what he will give, and then let us take the rest."

"Aye! When the best that he has to give is gone already to those whom he selects. Let us take all, and then cast lots as the custom is."

"Peace!" said the head-man. "Let us learn first why he comes. That is the way of wisdom. Why slay before there is any need? The leopard slays, and is sometimes chased away; but the vulture feeds. Let us watch, my brothers."

And at dawn, when Rodrick slept at last, and dreamed himself already High Commissioner of a brand-new Northwest Province, the hillmen left the embers of the council-fire, and strode off to their huts.

But before they went they had come to some decision. As each man in turn took one keen look down to the plain below, where Rodrick's camp-fires burned, eyes that were secretive for all their keenness narrowed just a little underneath the lids, and long lean forefingers crooked, as round a trigger. They have strange ideas on sport, and stranger still on hospitality, and none at all on mercy in the hill-haunts of the Orakzai Pathans.

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CHAPTER IV

A STRANGE CREED, AND A STRANGER WAY OF PICKING OUT A FRIEND

IT WAS Rodrick's servant who awoke him, clutching at his foot beneath the bedclothes and squeezing gently, as the Indian custom is.

"The dawn, sahib." He murmured. "The dawn is past these many hours."

And Rodrick sat up, and rubbed his eyes, and wondered for a minute why the sound of many voices came from beyond the tent-flap. It was more than a minute before he realized that the Orakzai had been forehanded in the matter of the durbar and the present-giving.

They had come, some hundreds of them, and were shifting restlessly around the camp, with no intention of departing until their greed and curiosity and suspicion had all three been satisfied.

He kept them waiting, though. He could hear the rattle of the knife-hilts, and the soft thud as curved jezail-butts met the ground. And he knew, as he could not have helped knowing even had his servant's face not told him plainly, that a wrong word or a hasty one that morning would seal the doom of every man in camp.

The Orakzai were not afraid, and they had been at some pains already to make that much obvious. The camp-servants were afraid, and very much so. But Rodrick took thought, and remembered that his nerve was about the only asset that he had. The sight of his servant's face, green-gray with terror, reminded him too that he was a sahib, and that these were savages.

"Tell them," he ordered, "that I will speak to them when I have eaten breakfast!"

The servant departed through the tent-door, and presently came in again.

"They say, sahib, that the hour grows late!"

Rodrick shrugged his shoulders.

"Roll up the tent-sides, and fold the front flap back," he commanded. "Then bring me my breakfast here at once."

The servant did as he was told, while Rodrick very ostentatiously took out a cigarette, and lit it, and sat down in his pajamas in the one camp-chair he had. It was a pitiable little bluff, for he was aware of at least a hundred giants, hot-breathed, low-growling plunderers, who obviously lusted for the loot, that were standing round him, leaning on their rifles and watching every move he made.

But he kept it up, and there was not a bearded ruffian among them who detected any sign of nerves.

He called his servant presently, and the servant, who was busy with his breakfast, did not hear. So they called the servant for him. They could have chosen nothing that would have made him feel his situation more keenly. They conveyed the impression of keenly interested savants calling for a bun to give a puppy that they would shortly vivisect. And that, too, under the fifteen-thousand-foot majesty of snow-topped Sikaram, that in itself would have awed a convinced atheist to the verge of prayer.

"Tell them," he commanded his servant, in the haughtiest and most indifferent tones he could assume, "that I prefer to eat alone! Tell them to wait somewhere in the distance. Say that, for the present, they have my leave to go."

"*R-r-r-uksa!*" said the servant; but the Orakzai stayed where they stood.

"Send for the interpreter," said Rodrick, who could have translated very well himself, but who was fighting grimly for his dignity beneath a shield of outward form. And the interpreter came, and repeated what Rodrick said to him, word for word.

THE Orakzai glanced first at one another, and then all eyes centered on the head-man, who seemed to be in doubt. He looked at Rodrick, and Rodrick screwed up every ounce of surprise and ruffled dignity and self-assurance he could find in his lonely pajama-clad anatomy, and waved him away. The head-man laughed, and went.

There was shame for his own obedience in the laugh, and scorn for Rodrick, and a hint of retaliation when the time came; and he turned his back with a movement that was studied insolence. But it was round number two for Rodrick. He was left to eat his breakfast alone and at his ease, while the hillmen sat in rows two hundred yards away, hook-nosed, hawk-eyed and watchful, for all the world like vultures waiting for an ox to die.

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And while he ate his breakfast, dallying with it purposely to emphasize his moral victory, and to let his own men see how little need there was to worry about Orakzai impatience, another litter came, borne down through a gash in the cliff that faced him, on the heads of half a dozen hillmen.

The interpreter stood out before the tent, and waved the men away. But the man on the litter shouted something back in Hindustani, and the men came on.

"Send them away!" said Rodrick, and the interpreter walked out toward them.

But again the man on the litter shouted, and had the flap at the back of Rodrick's tent been open, as the front was, he would have been astonished to see his timid little baboo—the frightened, fat, dormouse of a man, who had had to be carried when the day's march had exceeded seven or eight miles—standing on a boulder and making signals. He made three signals before the litter-men caught sight of him and stopped. Then the baboo came round timidly to the front of Rodrick's tent, and made a deep salaam.

"What is it, baboo?"

"Seeing you have not yet finished breakfast, sir, would it be well if I were to attend to this man?"

Rodrick stared at him, and stared again.

"Why, Sita Ram," he answered, "have you found your courage at last, then? I thought you were afraid to come outside your tent."

"I am a very fearful man, sir, but I am also much ashamed! Also it is not my wish that I should be an encumbrance. If your honor wishes, I will now proceed to find out what this man who is carried wants."

"Very well, then, baboo; go ahead!"

The baboo walked out to the litter, with very many glances at the waiting swarm of Orakzai, and the hillmen set down their awkwardly constructed load. The baboo's back was turned to Rodrick, so he could not see exactly what transpired, but he noticed that the carriers drew off to a little distance, and that the man on the litter raised his head, and talked very fast indeed.

Presently he went through a form of putting out his tongue, and holding out his wrist. The baboo produced a little bottle from his pocket, and tipped something out of it. The litter-bearers picked him up again, and the unusual procession started back toward the cleft from which it had emerged.

"A little case of fever, sahib," said the baboo, returning to the tent, and salaaming punctiliously. "I gave the fellow quinine from my own supply."

"He had a green turban, hadn't he?" asked Rodrick.

"You can see it, sahib."

"Then he is a Mohammedan?"

"Positively, sahib."

"And has made the pilgrimage to Mecca."

"So it would seem."

"What language did you use in talking to him?"

"Hindustani, sahib."

"Um-m-m! A Mohammedan, a hadji, who lives in these hills and speaks Hindustani and—what is your religion, Sita Ram?"

"I, sahib? I am of all creeds!"

"Aren't you a Hindu?"

"Sahib, my father said he was a Hindu."

"Then what are you?"

"Sahib, I believe that it is good to serve the Government. That is my religion!"

Rodrick laughed. The idea of this shabby-looking, nondescript individual making a religion of his loyalty was something that could not be taken seriously, even under the shoulder of Sikaram, with a hundred possibilities of instant death straight opposite. And he laughed, too, because he detected something deeper in this business. He thought—it was a vague sensation rather than a thought really — that the baboo was in some way fencing with him, and he did not care to show his thoughts.

"It's a great religion, baboo," he said, "that will set a hillman who has been to Mecca talking to a Hindu from the plains, and accepting physic from him. I congratulate you, baboo! I'll get you to teach me that religion, one of these days, when we've got more time. Now, will you get some of those packs open, please, and have the men lay their contents out in front of my tent here, while I'm dressing? I'm going to make a few presents to the headmen."

THE baboo bowed, and hurried off. He seemed uncommonly glad to get away, and once more Rodrick thought that he detected a vague something that he did not understand.

The impression he received was that the

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baboo was very glad indeed to have no more questions to answer. He had nothing definite, however, on which to base the least suspicion, and, though he decided to bear it in mind for future reference, he remembered, too, that it would scarcely pay him just at present to put even his timid baboo on the grill. He needed an atmosphere of friendliness around him, not one of reticence, which is so easy to create in India.

And while he dressed himself, and watched the piles of blankets and the mirrors and the knives and all the other truck that was extracted from the bales; while he ordered the men to pile the things in separate little heaps, and mentally decided how many presents he would give that day, he forgot about the baboo's conversation. When the piles were ready, and the baboo took his leave, and the hillmen rose and came toward him in a cluster, he forgot him altogether.

He might have remembered, and have been extremely interested, had he known that the baboo was busy writing in his tent. And had he known that what the baboo wrote was all in cipher, transposed from memory, and that, though it took him an hour to write, it covered no more than four square inches of paper, which was then folded, and cross-folded, and slipped into a tiny oiled-silk cover, and stitched up in the lining of the baboo's round skull cap—why then he would have been more interested still.

But he was busy with the hillmen, with the scarcely needed aid of his interpreter.

"Which is the head-man of you all?" he asked.

"We all be head-men!" came the answer.

"Listen!" He waved his interpreter aside, and raked his memory for native words. "My men here obey me. Here I am head-man, and there is but one man whose final word has weight—the head-man's, mine!" He tapped his breast. "Which of you men, then, is head-man?"

They scowled at one another, and then pushed out a wiry-looking ruffian who had stood a little to the front, but not so far in front that any of the others could have shot him from behind. He was the same who had done the talking the evening before. He stood with his rifle in the crook of his left arm, blinking and looking crafty, but not altogether at his ease.

"Are you, then, the head-man?" asked Rodrick.

The fellow nodded. He seemed a little diffident about it.

"Can you speak for the rest? Have you authority?"

The hillman felt his rifle-butt, and ran his thumb along the little row of notches that were cut in it. Then he pushed the butt out, so that Rodrick might see the notches too, and count them if he chose.

But he answered not a word.

"Understand me," said Rodrick. "I am here to make friends with you people, and for no other reason. I wish to drive no bargains, and I bring you no trouble, and no seed of trouble. These gifts here are not my gifts. They were given me by the burrha-sahib at Peshawur, to be delivered at my discretion to such head-men and others as I choose, though not for any price. They are a token of the burrha-sahib's great regard, and of his wish to preserve continual peace along the border-line. This, then, is thine."

He pointed to a quite enormous pile of merchandise, not one piece of which had cost the British-Indian Government much more than five rupees, but not one piece of which, either, was obtainable at any place to the northward of Peshawur. The hillman's eyes glinted, and he stooped and touched the bundle, and would have seized it in his arms.

But he thought better of it. He could not have used his rifle, with even one arm loaded up with gifts. On second thoughts, he put one foot on the heap, and turned half-way round, so as to face both Rodrick and his kin.

Rodrick smiled grimly. This looked like round number three to him already. He began to see light dawning on the problem of how to manage these hill-born plunderers.

"That will be all the presents that I give to-day," he said. "There will be another present-giving and a durbar, as I mentioned, some other day—perhaps to-morrow."

There was a murmur from the loot-hungry ruffians behind him, and a voice called from the rear of the cluster, "We be many! We be all head-men!"

"This man here, though, by your own admission, is the chief head-man," answered Rodrick. "I, too, of my party, am the

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chief head-man. It is well! It is good that the first meeting should be between chief head-men only. You now have my leave to go."

The man who had received so many presents still stood with one foot on the pile. He seemed to be in something of a quandary. He dared not pick them up, and there was no one in the crowd who would do the portering for him. They saw his predicament, and realized at once what a fall his new-found dignity as openly acknowledged chief of them would get if he were obliged to carry them himself. So they drew away, with no effort to express politeness toward either him or Rodrick. They fell away in little clusters, muttering.

RODRICK grinned again.

"Yussuf Mahmoud!" he commanded.

"Huzoor!"

The interpreter saluted him, in almost military style.

"Are you afraid to go up to the hilltop there, with this chief?"

"Under the shadow of your honor's protecting presence, why should I fear?" he answered. "Besides, they are my people. I am a Khamkanni, from beyond the farther slope of Sikaram, and the Khamkannis and the Zaimukhts and the Orakzai are cousins. I have no blood-feuds here."

"Then, carry that pile of presents for the head-man, will you."

The interpreter's expression of egregious servility departed from him like a sun-ray from the slope of Sikaram, and he became clouded on the instant by an air of distant dignity.

"My *izzat*, sahib! My honor! Am I a porter?"

"You are under my orders!"

"But are there not porters here?"

"None who would not be afraid to go. You have your orders, Yussuf Mahmoud! Take up the presents!"

The interpreter obeyed him sullenly, muttering to himself in undertones about his honor and his rheumatism and his civil rating. But the hillman who stood thumbing at the little notches on his rifle-butt looked straight for a second into Rodrick's eyes, and his own eyes smiled.

"We be two men, thou and I!" he said. "Both wise men! Both men of understanding!"

"You have my leave to go," said Rodrick, and the hillman raised his rifle to a species of salute and turned and went, with the grumbling interpreter panting to keep pace with him.

"One friend made, and one enemy!" said Rodrick to himself. "I need the friend—badly. And I don't think I would have trusted that interpreter in any case. O—baboo!" he called. And, when the baboo came, "Have all these bundles put into a tent, please, and check them carefully."

CHAPTER V

"SOME TRUTH THERE WAS, BUT DASH'D AND BREWED WITH LIES,
TO PLEASE THE FOOLS AND PUZZLE ALL THE WISE."

THE Himalayan hillmen, and in particular the Orakzai Pathans, have a host of faults that outweigh their virtues in the ratio of three to one. Their virtues are mostly negative, and their faults as positive as lust and a desire to lie and mutual mistrust can make them.

They distrust anything that has the power of speech. They lie, always, for fear that the truth may be of value to the other man. They love to argue, and to vie with one another for the leadership.

So they are no longer within the Anglo-Indian "sphere of influence." They have succumbed to the influence of motives that are rather different from their own, and a flag that is symbolical of what the *Pax Britannica* entails flies, these days, from the slope of Sikaram.

But then, in '79, when the Second Afghan War was scarcely more than under way, they were collectively about as arrogant as Lucifer himself. For forty years they had been nominally under Anglo-Indian "protection," and for the whole of that period they had laughed at the idea. In addition to jezails, they were very largely armed with rifles stolen from British outposts, and from guard-rooms, even, in Peshawur. They had not often repulsed an expedition sent against them; but their sniping tactics, and their mountaineer ability to run away and hide and crop up again unexpectedly in awkward places, together with the natural impregnability of their Titan-twisted hills, had rendered every punitive campaign abortive.

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But their mistrust of one another, and their love of wordy argument, had made them a thorn in the side of the Anglo-Indian Government all these years, instead of a really dangerous invading enemy, that would have had to be met and smashed. And exactly the same cause had prevented them from welding naturally into an empire of their own, such as Afghanistan, that could be left by the English as a "buffer-state" between India and the dreaded Russia.

They were a thorn that would have to be plucked out at some time or another, and the operation was being put off only until the harassed Government could spare the time and money. But, in the meanwhile, they were arrogant, and, hillman-wise, had failed to read the signs or learn any real lessons from their past experience.

Their windy arguments, and their little night-conducted forays for the sake of loot went on; but, above all and before all, the arguments. They loved—these Orakzai particularly—to meet at night, and talk until the great log-fire died down and the shadows ceased to dance on the stone walls of the council-house.

And after that, of course, it suited them to sleep late. There were always watchmen posted in the little sangas that were dotted here and there along the ridges.

There was no village, however late it chose to sleep, that did not imagine itself secure against surprise, and that did not sleep more soundly for the thought. Until the mists had left the mountain-slopes, and the early-morning chill had vanished before the scorching sun, it was the exception to find a village stirring.

But there were exceptions, of course, to all their rules. There had been one that morning, when they had risen at dawn, and had waited before Rodrick's tent; and there was another now. There was a midday council under way, presided over by a head-man who sat watchfully upon a pile of presents.

In the middle of it, feeling very ill at ease, there stood none other than Rodrick's Pathan interpreter. He knew his own kinsmen, and he knew, far better than Rodrick did, how much his present chance of life was worth. He was glad to be there, for information's sake, but he was frightened. And, being a hillman—and a renegade hillman, which is worse—he was thinking along hillman lines, and was prepared to fight for his own hand from a hillman point of view—which is oblique, not straight.

The head-man was saying nothing. He was very watchful, and he was counting heads, and figuring up his chances of establishing his head-manship beyond dispute. What Rodrick had said to him, and done to him that morning had fired his primitive ambition. He was wondering just how many of the younger men might be counted on to back his claims. It was an older man than he, and his rival for the head-manship, who was doing nearly all the talking and was cross-examining the uncomfortable Yussuf Mahmoud.

"WHY came he?" he demanded.

"Of a truth, I know not, except that he had orders."

"Has he rifles with him, or ammunition hidden in those packs?"

"None that I know of. But I know not for a certainty what may be in all of them."

"Is he the forerunner of a host of others? Are there troops behind him, which will follow in a day or so?"

"None that I have seen. How can there be? The troops are all fighting up in Afghanistan, and those few that are left are needed to mount guard."

"Is Peshawur, then, unguarded?"

Yussuf Mahmoud hesitated—for the fraction of a second. His own skin was all that he was thinking of and, to a hillman, the more indirect a plan is, and the deeper fraught with cunning, the better.

"Almost. Yes! I, who have lived there now these many seasons, and who know the manner of the placing of the guard, could show the way. I could lead a raid there that could not fail!"

There followed silence for about three minutes, while every born raider in the low-roofed hut drew in his breath, and thought of the loot that might be. Then the rival for the district chieftainship resumed his questioning.

"Is he here, then, as a spy? Is he come to keep a watch on us, and to report in time, before we make a move?"

"I know not what his orders are. I know only this, that I was ordered to come with him, and to interpret for him when it might be necessary, and to advise him in all such matters as I, being a hillman

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born, might better understand than he."

The last part of his statement was, of course, a quite unqualified lie, but his interrogators could not be expected to know that. If he had told the truth, that he was merely an interpreter, they would have believed at once that he was lying. But what he did say had to them the smack of probability, and they only guessed that he was telling half the truth, instead of all of it.

There could be two imaginable reasons for his coming. A hillman leaves his native hills, as a rule, because he happens to have stirred a blood-feud with his neighbors that is rather too serious to face. He comes back again when he learns that the other parties to the feud are dead. But an exiled hillman is *always* homesick; so there might be truth in what he said about a raid.

He might be offering them an opportunity and guidance, in return for which he would bargain for a settlement of his feud —the shooting down in cold blood, and from ambush, of a few of his own tribe. There was not one man present who would have hesitated to strike that bargain with him.

He saw, with the quick perception of a man who is fencing for his life with others of his own mental caliber, that he had scored a point, so he hastened to improve on it.

"His camp down there, as you have seen, is full of valuable things. But these things he will give you. There is no need to take. And others follow. There will come a column, also without arms, that will bring him more bales, containing yet more gifts. It will come in about a month, or sooner possibly. Why, then, kill him or rob his camp before the second column comes?"

"How know you this?"

"Am I not in his confidence? Did I not march all this distance at his saddle-bow? Have I not slept each night while we were on the march in the little bath-place of his tent?"

He omitted to relate the real reason of this seeming intimacy: how he had been frightened almost into palsy at the notion of returning to the hills, but had been sent in spite of his hundred and one hurriedly thought-up excuses; how Rodrick had been warned that he might try to bolt; and how, in consequence. Rodrick had kept him within reach, and had caused another servant whom he really trusted to share the "bath-place" with him every night.

His brain was working fast now, and he was ready to lie glibly along any line at all that seemed to offer least resistance.

"What manner of man is this—what is his name, this G-rrr-odd-rikk? Allah, what a name! What kind of man is he? A liar?"

"Nay! He is like all these English. He tells truth as a little child tells it, and believes lies as a little child believes them. Open as the day, pig-headed as the pigs whose flesh he eats, fearless as the habit of his nation is, and more foolish even than the most of them."

"Does he trust thee?"

"Surely!"

It was vanity that dictated that answer.

"Then, he surely is a fool!"

Every head nodded. There had been no humor intended in that remark. It was logical, convincing hillman reasoning and nothing more.

"Then, go thou back to his camp and wait and listen and report to us each new plan that he makes. If thy work is well done in this particular, we will spare thee when the time comes."

But Yussuf Mahmoud had other notions of his own. When "the time came," he did not purpose to be there, to run the risk entailed. He had no false ideas about the inviolability of hillman promises.

"How can I?" he demanded. "See, now, how late it is! He sent me here to bear a load and then return; I should have been absent one hour at the most, but now four hours are gone, and still I come not. Know ye these Englishmen's ideas on discipline? When I go back, he will beat me. And then he will ask me questions. And, whether I lie to him or not, he will suspect that I am lying, and he will no longer trust me with his secrets. I know a better plan!"

"What then?"

"I will bear a message. Send me straight back to Peshawur. Give me safe passage to the plains again. He will think that I have run away, and will trouble little on that score; ye also should tell him that I ran. I will say in Peshawur that he sent me with a letter, and that I was robbed, and the letter stolen from me on the road. I will say, though, that because he feared

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I might be robbed, he told me, too, the wording of the letter, that I might give the message by word of mouth in any case. Let the message be that 'all is well, and that it is time now for the other presents to be sent.' Then they will send the other column. Then there will be something worthy of the looting. Then, when I have spied out the weakness of Peshawur once again, there might be a raid, done swiftly in the night-time, and many rifles and much ammunition would accrue. Then—are not our relatives the Afghans clamoring for help?"

"And when this second column came, if in truth it did come, wouldst thou come with it?"

"Nay! Why should I? I would wait there in Peshawur, watching, and working out a plan for what would follow."

CHILDISH and worse than childish though the interpreter's suggestions might have seemed to men who had any knowledge of the world outside their hills, they seemed like wisdom to the Orakzai. In the first place, he was talking treachery, and that was plausible and understandable. In the second place, they had very nearly always succeeded in their raids, and the subsequent thatch-burning by the punitive force had been a little price to pay for stolen rifles, which were worth their weight—to them—in silver coin. And, in the third place, it did not seem quite advisable after all to let the interpreter go back to Rodrick.

He had told them all Rodrick's secrets, or so they thought. Therefore he would probably tell Rodrick theirs.

There was an alternative, however, and they discussed that thoroughly, after they had sent him to another building under guard.

"Why not kill the man, and have done with him?"

The real head-man interposed a voice at last to that suggestion. He intended to differ from them in any case, whatever their argument might be, and to force an issue. He had decided that he could swing the allegiance of the younger men, and that his slender margin of authority would do the rest.

"My opinion is," he growled, "that we should keep this man a prisoner, and say to that man Rr-rodd-rikk, his master, that he ran away, back to Peshawur. What we have thus in the hollow of our hand let us hold and not relinquish! Let the second column come, or let it not come. At least we have what is here, and what is now here can not get away! Should the second column come, of which he speaks, how know we that it comes unarmed? And, while we hold this Yussuf Mahmoud a prisoner, we have a man who can speak English, and can be made to speak it, if need be."

"I think that my plan is best!" said the older man, who had done all the talking hitherto.

"I did not ask thee!"

He sat quite still and glared. But his forefinger caressed the trigger of his rifle; and, though his eyes were fixed like a tiger's on the older man's, he was absolutely conscious of the fact that half of the room was with him, and that the other half was watching points and wondering which side to take.

The older man mumbled a word or two into his beard, and dropped his eyes. That settled it, for the time being at all events, and the younger man went on:

"Those other three that we have in the hut down in the valley yonder speak a strange tongue that none of us know. They talk to us in our language, and to one another in a tongue that no man in this country speaks or understands. They are white-skinned men, and they have strange foreign habits. So, although they swear that they are not English, and that they hate the English, it is likely that they can speak English. Yussuf Mahmoud, too, speaks English. Let us put him in with them, and keep him there. Then let us take him out again, and listen to him. We will at least know then more than we know now, and will have lost nothing!"

"And Rrrr-odd-rikk? What of him?"

"Leave him for the present where he is. Whom can he harm? Let him give his presents, and betray himself. Presently, when he has no more left to give and his medicines are finished—forget not his medicines, nor yet his skill!—and when we have taken yet more counsel in this matter, then we will make a plan."

"Aye! His medicines! There be many sick yet!"

"I think that thou hast a plan," said the older man, whose pretensions to the

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leadership were not unbacked. "I think that thou playest false! This Rrr-odd-rikk and thou——"

"Thou growest too old!" the other snarled. "Thou dodderest! Speak not too much, lest thy remaining teeth fall out! I —Mohammed bin Suliman—am head-man here! Hast thou ought to say to that?"

There was a low laugh, that rippled round the room, and the old man lowered his eyes once more.

"Then that is settled! Ho! Outside there!"

A dozen youths came running through the doorway, very anxious to discover what had been the upshot of the durbar.

"Take that man Yussuf Mahmoud and place him with the three prisoners in the valley yonder! Say nothing to him, answer him nothing. Shut him in with them and leave him there, and see that the guard is doubled!"

CHAPTER VI

"FEET IN THE FOREST THAT LEAVE NO MARK,
EYES THAT CAN SEE IN THE DARK—IN THE DARK."

YOUNG Rodrick waited three hours for his Pathan interpreter, walking about among the tents, setting the camp in order, seeing to the serving out of rations. One or two more wounds were brought to him to dress from villages some little distance off, which had already heard the news. Then, when there was still no sign of Yussuf Mahmoud, he grew restless, and made up his mind to go in search of him.

"If I'm in danger here," he reflected, as he waited for his horse, "I'll be in no worse danger up there, looking for him. And besides, I've an idea that there's a better road here than the one we took. According to the record, two regiments of Guides came up here once, and they reported a practicable road somewhere near here. If I keep my eyes open, I may find it."

So he mounted and rode off, leaving a Jemadar in charge, with strict injunctions not to allow a single man to leave the camp. The Jemadar looked at him as though he would have liked to remonstrate, and the little mouse-man of a baboo actually dared to tender his advice.

"*Kabadah, sahib!*" he warned him. "Have a care! These hillmen are worse than devils! They lie ambushed behind rocks, and shoot only when you can not see them. 'A hillman, an assassin, and a thief, sahib——' You know the saying?"

Rodrick laughed. "I've heard a lot of things about the hillmen, baboo. Yes, I've heard that saying, too. 'All three are one!' What? But now I'm going to tell *you* something, babooji! When you're afraid, when you're very much afraid, the best course to pursue is to conceal the fact. That's particularly the case when you're dealing with men who are uncivilized. Now if you show the next hillman that you're not afraid of him, if you behave as you did this morning, in fact, you'll find that there'll be less reason to feel afraid."

"That is very good advice, sahib, for a man who does not know how being frightened feels. I am very frightened, and I fear for your life, should you ride away alone. Sahib, if I do not know these hillmen from actual acquaintance, I at least know all the truth about them."

"You're a strange mixture, babooji. If you know so much that's bad about them, why did you come with me? You're not like the interpreter. You weren't obliged to come. I understand you volunteered."

"That, sahib, was for my honor's sake! But I *am* frightened."

"It's hard to say, baboo, whether you've been most careful of your honor, then, or most foolish. Now that you're here, though, you've got to make the best of it, and try not to seem afraid. And, as for your honor, well—that's creditable of you, anyhow. The most honorable thing that you can do while I'm away is to keep your eyes open, and see that the camp is kept in proper order."

The baboo bowed, and Rodrick rode away.

"I don't know," he muttered, "I don't know, I'm sure, whether to like that little man and trust him, or to like him and distrust him, or plain, downright to dislike him! I think, on the whole, I like him and—oh, I don't know. He's only a baboo. Well—I wonder! Hang it, I wonder!"

HE WOULD not have wondered any longer; he would have disliked and distrusted him both, if he could have seen the baboo five minutes after he had ridden through the cleft in the hillside

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opposite. The baboo called to his tent a porter, a strange-looking, wiry, dark-copper-colored man, of a different tribe from all the others; a man who had been very silent on the march, and silent still in camp, but a glutton for work of any kind that came his way. He said little to the porter. But he took from his skull-cap the tiny oiled-silk package he had written out so carefully, and gave it to the man, with a bag, in which was food—not very much food, but sufficient to sustain life for a few days at a pinch.

"Be very quick!" he ordered. "And say the one word, 'Sikaram.' Go now!"

The porter slipped the oilskin package between his cheek and teeth, tucked the bag of food inside his loin-cloth and went off without a word. He sauntered past the Jemadar, and chatted with a group of other porters—which was a rather unusual thing for him to do—and slipped, when he saw the opportunity, behind a rolling ridge that ran from about the middle of the level ground to where the path began along which the column had ascended.

When he reached the path, he got up from his hands and knees and leaped into his stride. Whatever could have caught him for the first mile would have been something in the record-breaking line. After that, he settled down into the steady dog-trot that men of his build and birth can keep up by the long day at a time, and by evening he was far beyond the range or reach of even the outer pickets of the Orakzai.

Rodrick, had he known of it, would have certainly distrusted his baboo after that, and he would quite probably have placed him in confinement. On the face of it, the circumstance did look like treachery, or the beginnings of it.

But a superficial view of India and the happenings of India is, without exception, a very wise one not to take.

India is more full of mystery than any other land, and more than nine-tenths of it is deliberately calculated by the thousand social grades, and the hundreds of religious bodies and the hundred thousand trades, as a means of keeping distinct from all the rest. The other ten per cent. includes a little mystery that is fostered by the Government. The agents of that Government mystery—the secret-service men—are the only men in all India, or the world, who can thread in and out like needles among the complicated pattern of the rest, and understand it, and track it down, and so place at the service of the Government what would be in any other country a hydra-headed danger.

They could tell more stories than Harun-al-Raschid ever knew. But they hold their jobs because they hold their tongues. No man but their immediate superior knows who is a secret-service man and who is not. Collectively they make up the largest, swiftest-moving, most mysterious secret-service force on earth.

Each man reports to his superior direct, or to whom his superior may instruct; and, unless by the merest accident, or through the exigencies of the service, he knows nothing of the other men. His own brother or his father or his son might be of the service, and the man himself not know it.

They will stop at nothing. They will lie or steal, or even kill if need be. They will even tell the truth, on rare occasions, when they happen on a man who surely will not believe the truth. But crimes such as they commit are of the order of a soldier's. They are like the mail-runners, who would infinitely rather die than lose the mail-bag, and who constantly face tigers and robbers and flooded streams, and get through none the less on schedule-time because "that way honor lies."

They have but one deathless motive, these scant-paid, unsung scoundrels of the Indian underworld. In one respect at least they are like the Jesuits, for, come what may, they never forget their duty to what a layman might be disposed to call "the game."

Starving or fed, naked or clothed, bleeding or whole, frightened or unafraid, they obey their orders. They die with their secrets in their heads, confiding in no man but the man named in their orders.

A battered corpse goes floating down a river. Or a bullet somewhere in the hills stops with a sudden thud. Or a trap-door creaks beneath a Hindu temple. C.091 is dead perhaps. But his secret dies in his head with him, and Z.59 or H.321 takes up the thread from where he last reported, and "the game" goes on.

There must be a register, kept somewhere, of all these secret-service men. Perhaps there are many registers. But no one will tell you where they are, or whose

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names are written in them. The secret-service men are drawn from any grade, from any tribe of all those many hundred tribes that can produce a master-actor. Some few are known to be policemen. A few, a very few, are soldiers. There are Government-clerks among them, and transport-riders, and telegraphists. There is scarcely a grade of Government-employment that does not contain one of them, or more. But the bulk are unattached, and it is the unattached who do the ferreting.

So, although Rodrick knew, of course, as every man in India knows, that the secret-service force was a very real and almost ever-present nerve in the intricate machine of Government, he had no notion that its men were working near him. He rather wondered why they were not. It seemed to him that the Commissioner would have been very wise indeed to have put a dozen or more secret-service men at his disposal.

He had never, to his knowledge, worked with them. But in various Government-posts he had acted on reports sent in by them to his superiors and passed on down to him for "record and guidance;" and he had never known their information to be inaccurate.

He wondered more and more why none of them had been placed at his disposal.

AND that thought set him to wondering why he himself was there at all. As he rode up through the mountain-pass, with the reins slack so that his horse might pick the way without hindrance, and his pipe glowing comfortably, he did not find that the fresh air and the mountain scenery did anything to lessen the incomprehensibility of India.

"I'm here," he thought, "because old man Bagge sent me! And commissioners of provinces don't send a man without good reason to an unholy buzzards' roost like this. Bagge knows what the Orakzai are like. He knows that they are armed, and that I'm not. He knows that I'm a good three days' forced march beyond the reach of help. There must be something else he knows that he hasn't told me, or something he suspects, or else—or else he's doing something or other along another line, and I'm just a stalking-horse. I'd give a lot to know which of those guesses is the right one!"

He rode on until he came to a place where the hill-path forked. Both branches of the ragged trail seemed to have been used equally. Each wound out of sight of the other—one roughly east, one west. He had to make his choice, and there was no apparent hurry, so he turned his horse and gazed behind him.

In a moment he was glad that he had done so, for away and away to the south-eastward of him he could see a practicable trail go rolling down in the direction of Peshawur. It was nothing like a road, of course, or at least a made road. But it was one of those strange freaks of nature that seem to have been included in the map in preparation for the coming of the civilized.

"There's the way back!" he muttered to himself.

And he sat there for a minute or two, and suppressed the thoughts that came involuntarily. He had not admitted, not even to the baboo, not even to himself, that fear was in him. But as he sat his horse there, he was conscious of the atmosphere of cruelty and treachery around him, and the broad trail that he could see go winding over shoulder after shoulder of tremendous hill looked singularly alluring.

But he dismissed the thought, and turned his horse about, and chose the left-hand path—for no other reason than that it seemed the easier for the horse.

He had ridden up it perhaps a hundred yards, and had turned into a ghat whose sides were so close-set that he had little more than knee-room, and so steep as to be quite unclimbable, when he felt, rather than saw, his reins seized.

He looked down into the eyes of the strangest figure of a man he had ever seen.

He was a hillman surely; his nose and beard and eyes betrayed that fact. But he was not dressed like a hillman, if he can be said to have been even dressed at all. He was more or less completely covered up with rags and bits of skin, and almost anything that could be made to serve as raiment, and his beard and hair were matted up with mud, as though he had been sleeping in some mud wallow. He had a knife, but it was not a hillman's knife, and he had not drawn it. It was long and thin and straight, like some that Rodrick had seen in Delhi, and it was strapped to his thigh, with the hilt protruding just above the hip-bone.

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"What do you want?" asked Rodrick, making no effort to recover the reins, but looking down and smiling at him. The coolness of his nerve surprised himself even, for he had felt distinctly lonely and defenseless ten minutes ago.

"Not this way!" said the man, in Hindustani.

Rodrick stared at him, in open-eyed amazement.

"What kind of a hillman can you be," he demanded, in the same tongue, "that speak first in Hindustani?"

The man began to force the horse backward toward the entrance of the ghat again, and Rodrick let him do it. He had a small revolver in his pocket, but he had no intention of either using or producing it until he needed to.

"Not this way!" said the man again; and again he spoke in Hindustani.

"Well, I'll be ——!" said Rodrick.

It seemed like a foolish thing to say, but there was nothing else that he could think of that would fit the situation. The man forced the horse backward, and Rodrick did nothing to prevent him, merely sitting still and watching this weird guardian of the pass, with particular attention to that long straight knife of his.

When they reached the place where the trail was wide enough, the savage-looking, evil-smelling ruffian turned the horse, and led him on downward, hurrying, and answering nothing to Rodrick's repeated questions. And when they reached the place where the two forks of the hill-path joined, he pointed downward, in the direction of the camp.

"Now that way!" he ordered.

"You are very kind," said Rodrick, "but I'm going up! I'll take this other path, if you prefer it!"

But the guardian of the ghat pointed downward again, with a long, lean, muscle-lumpy arm, and then tapped at his knife-hilt with a warning finger, and shook his head, and raised his chin, and drew a finger most suggestively across his throat.

"Oh, as for that, my friend," said Rodrick, "I imagine I could give a pretty good account of myself, so far as you are concerned! Threats won't help you."

"That way!" said the man, once again pointing down toward the camp.

" 'On no account,' " remembered Rodrick, " 'force any issue, on any point at all!' "

This was a most distinct issue and, unless tact consisted in obedience, there was not room for even a display of tact.

"Oh, very well!" he answered. "I suppose you've a guilty conscience inside those rags of yours. Is that the trouble? Come down to my camp with me, and I'll make you a present of some real clothes, to cover up your sins. Come on! Hold my stirrup!"

BUT the fellow shook his head. Instead of leading on toward the camp or following, he turned. With his open palm he hit the horse's rump such a sudden and stupendous smack that the animal sprang forward and downward—leaping like a goat from level place to lower level. By the time that Rodrick could settle in his seat again and get his mount within control, he was more than a quarter of a mile away from where the trail forked. And then he held his course, straight on and downward for the camp.

So he did not see the faded green turban that rose above a rock behind him; nor the face beneath it, that was strangely like the man's that the baboo had treated to quinine. Nor could he overhear the conversation that took place in guttural Pushtu.

"Did he say much?" asked he of the green turban.

"He swore."

"Did he ask questions?"

"Aye, many questions."

"What?"

"Who I am and what I am and whence I come and why I act thus, and all the other questions that a child would ask a stranger."

"And thou?"

"I said nothing."

"Good! Did he give tongue to nothing else but oaths and questions?"

"Aye. He promised me good clothing, if I would go with him."

"Thou needest clothing."

"None more than I."

"I think that I will send thee to his camp in a little while. Then he will surely give thee what he promised. Thou has earned at the least a blanket! But, for the present, watch! Through the night I have others who will watch, but watch thou in the daytime, and see to it that he rides into no ambushes. His blood be on thy head! Understandest thou?"

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"I understand."

"Then watch!"

The green turban disappeared, and the ill-clad fellow with the knife began to follow Rodrick down the track, springing much as the horse had done from level down to level, but taking infinite pains not to expose himself to view.

By the time that Rodrick reached the plain, he had ensconced himself between two rocks that overlooked the camp, underneath an overhanging ledge that cut him off from the view of any one who might have tried to look down from above. And there he stayed, perched like an eagle between earth and heaven, quite invisible, but watching ceaselessly and tirelessly each movement on the plain below.

CHAPTER VII

"MAY WE NEVER WANT A FRIEND IN NEED, NOR A BOTTLE TO GIVE HIM!"

WHEN Sigurd Rodrick reached his camp again, he was feeling not quite pleased with himself. He had been rebuffed by a savage, and no white man enjoys that sensation, even when he has strict orders to accept rebuffs, and the responsibility and shame are rightly some one else's. So he called the roll. That was at least a dignified proceeding, calculated to serve in some measure as a palliative to his sense of insignificance. And, of course, he discovered that one porter was missing from the list.

He remembered the porter; remembered that he had been a very silent man, and friendless. There was nothing in the least extraordinary, or even unexpected, in such a man's becoming homesick, and deciding to make a bolt. But the opportunity for salving his own wounded feelings by making a show of his authority was too good to be lost. No man with a white man's sense of pride would have missed it.

So he called a sort of drumhead civil court, and proceeded to forget his personal mental discomfort in the not generally very interesting process of sifting through a mass of Oriental lies.

The baboo and the Jemadar got far the worst of it, although every single member of the expedition did his level Asiatic best to lie in keeping with the occasion. The baboo denied promptly and frankly, without equivocation, that he knew a thing about it. He withstood a fifteen-minute cross-examination in a manner worthy of the land that gave him birth.

The Jemadar came next, by right of precedence. But he had neither the baboo's education nor his artistry. He did well though. On the spur of the moment, and without a word of prompting or suggestion, he invented a long-winded story about the porter's having picked a quarrel with another porter, and having threatened to murder him.

He even picked the second party to the quarrel, and produced him; and the man who had been chosen so unexpectedly for the honor confirmed every single word. He had heard what was said, of course, but he added interesting details for the sake of art and his own honor.

Every other porter had a lie to tell, each with some imaginary bearing on the situation, and each designed in a hurry to prove, as well as the deserter's miscreancy, the narrator's utter, unblemished, unquestionable virtue.

And all of the lies had, of course, a little compliment for Rodrick cunningly side-twisted into them.

"Why, bless my soul, this makes me homesick," murmured Rodrick. "I might be back in the Chandni Chowk at Delhi, listening to police-court cases. Go ahead! Bring up the next man! Let's hear his version!"

And while Rodrick was bullyragging the whole camp, and extracting most unchristian pleasure from the obvious discomfort of the baboo and the Jemadar and from the quite gratuitous mendacity of all the rest, another little conclave was proceeding not much more than a mile away from him, in a stone hut that was perched up on a hilltop.

IT WAS Mohammed bin Suliman's hut—that of the now acknowledged head-man, who was, however, not so certain of his head-manship that he dared as yet take too many liberties. He was alone in the hut, save for one man. That man wore a turban that had once been glittering green, but now was faded.

"Thou sayest! Aye, thou sayest!" growled Mohammed bin Suliman. "Thou sayest that thou art a priest. Thou sayest thou hast been to Mecca. Thou comest here

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from Allah knows where. Thou growest fat on the best of all we have——"

But the priest saw fit to interrupt him.

"Fat? Then feel my ribs. Am I not a shame to thee and the Orakzai? Never was priest so ill-provided for, none so hungry since the Prophet himself had need to fast!"

"Peace!" said the head-man, restlessly. "Thy wants, if thou yet hast room inside thee, shall be filled. I spoke of other matters. Thou sayest it will not be wise to slay this G-rrr-odd-rikk, but that it will be wise to give to thee—to thee, O priest!—the package that the big one of our three prisoners yonder had hidden underneath his shirt."

"I said it."

"What men hide, priest, is of value. Who hides a broken shard? Why should I give this thing of value to thee, who hast already eaten half the provisions of the tribe?"

The priest made as though to bare his ribs again, but desisted with an air of resignation to neglect.

"Use it thyself, then!" he advised with scorn. "Thou, with thy hillman wisdom!"

The other chose to ignore that sarcasm. He was delving apparently for information, not additional advice.

"Thou sayest that thou art a priest, and the servant of Allah. But thou holdest conversations in the shadows of the boulders with the ghosts who walk by night, for I have seen thee. How know I that thou too art not a devil?"

"How?" asked the priest. "What false advice have I yet given thee? Who, tell me, made all the younger men to follow thee? Who is now head-man of the tribe—thou or the other?"

"Of a truth I am head-man."

"Then do I get no reward? Is this empty belly here fit recompense for all my counseling? Is what I ask of so much worth to thee that thou must withhold it?"

The two men glared at each other, each endeavoring to fathom what the other had in mind, and each determined to keep his own thoughts to himself.

"He who brought the young men to thy back, can make them swerve again in their allegiance!"

Mohammed bin Suliman caressed his rifle-butt, rubbing his thumb along it where the notches were.

" 'Twould be the first time that I shot a priest," he murmured. "Does a priest die quickly, like a man?"

The priest bit down his anger, and essayed a laugh.

"Then shoot!" he answered. "That is a fair way to avoid a settlement. A generous way. A creditable way. It would sound well before the tribal council! 'Why shot I the hadji? Because he asked me for the price for which he bargained and that I agreed to pay. It is my custom to shoot priests, and all such as desire their just price. That is one more notch on my rifle-butt. Lo! I put it there. I, Mohammed bin Suliman, shooter of ill-nourished and defenseless priests, and head-man of the village.' Fool! How long wouldst thou be head-man? Fool! Aye, thickhead, thou art worse than fool! Why talk with fools? Wait while I curse thee. Listen!"

"Curses broke no skulls yet, O priest!"

"Thou sterile offspring of a once prolific stock! Thy sons and thy daughters wither even now, and no more children shall be born to thee! Thy wives——"

"Peace!" said the head-man. "Hold thy evil tongue!"

"Thy wives——"

"Here! Here is thy package! Take it!"

He put his hand inside his coat and drew out a bulky little packet, sealed at both ends and wrapped in oiled paper.

"Take it, and withdraw thy curse!" he said, tossing it across to him, and shuddering.

"The curse was not yet more than started!" said the priest, catching the packet nimbly and secreting it.

The strange glitter in his eyes might have been due to fervor; or perhaps elation caused it, at the winning of his price. Whatever the reason may have been, his eyes shone like a wildcat's through the gloom of the low-roofed hut.

"Withdraw thy curse, I said!"

"It was a curse for fools—and I only cursed a little—not the whole of it. I will withdraw it all on proof of further wisdom. The little that I cursed will do no present harm."

"No present harm! My children and my wives! No present harm?"

"What are thy sons to thee—thou who wouldst shoot a priest? Art thou not head-man? Is not that enough?"

"Hadji, withdraw it!"

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"Nay! Not that little one."

"But, my sons and——"

"I will see to it that my curse goes not forth yet awhile. I will wait and see."

"For what waitest thou?"

"For signs of wisdom."

"What, then, is wisdom?"

"What I told thee! Go down to this man Rrr-odd-rikk, and be friends with him! Thou and thy young men take the presents that he has to give, and let those who are not with thee go without. Then, when the day comes that thou needest friends—as thou wilt surely need them—this man Rrr-odd-rikk will stand behind thee. Behind him is wealth, as thou hast seen, and power, as thou hast not yet seen. Behind thee, what is there? A handful of thine enemies, a blood-feud here and there, and the young men of the tribe, who one day will dispute thy leadership. What else?"

The head-man hesitated. He knew full well the insecurity of his position, and he knew, too, that he could strengthen it prodigiously by any strategy that would secure the distribution of all Rodrick's gifts among his own immediate following. He was battling, though, with the hillman's ingrained distrust of foreigners.

"What other course is there? Wilt join the Afghans? Go, then! Take thy best men with thee, and leave the slopes of Sikaram unguarded. Fight for the Afghans, and see how they repay thee. And then return, and find thy thatch all burned, and all thy country pillaged! Will the English lie quiet, think you, while you join their enemy?"

"But, if I slay this G-rrr-odd-rikk, what then? How then can harm come of it?"

"Harm, say you? All of the plunder will first be divided up among the tribe, including thy portion. Thou knowest what the rule is in such matters. Then will come horsemen from the plains below, to avenge him. And then, when the horsemen have finished, and have eaten up the corn and fired the villages, will the tribe keep thee still as head-man? Thou who hast brought this on their heads?"

"I go!" said the head-man. "I will make believe to like this G-rrr-odd-rikk. I will give him fair talk, for talk is cheap, and at least I will hold my hand a while."

"When goest thou?"

"To-morrow."

"Good!"

"And thou, forget not thy share in this! Speak thou with the others of the tribe, and build up my authority."

"Why else did I come here?" asked the priest, patting furtively the little package he had hidden in his clothes.

CHAPTER VIII

"WAS I DECEIVED, OR DID A SABLE CLOUD TURN FORTH HER SILVER LINING ON THE NIGHT?"

THE jails of Siberia are not notorious for decency or cleanliness or ventilation, nor yet are they renowned for light-of-day honesty in the treatment of their inmates. The Russians have frequently revised their prison-laws and brought them up to date, completing the mechanism for injustice and cruelty that former administrations—less educated and enlightened—left unfinished. They are now among the wonders of the world.

But the Russian bureaucracy who give so much time and careful thought to the systematic punishment of the unwashed did not design the prisons or their regulations with a view to sharing in their hospitality themselves. Far from it. They are a picksome, finicky brigade, these Russian gentlemen, possessed of gentlemanly notions on the comfort that is due them.

So when three Russian officers came down to Sikaram—armed with prospecting tools and note-books for appearance's sake, and with big-game rifles and cold coin for the sake of argument—and preached red rebellion to the Orakzai Pathans, they were disgruntled and disgusted and amazed to find their little camp surrounded one morning, in the very early dawn, and themselves hurried, without argument or explanation, and thrown rather than pushed into a prison that was even worse than anything Siberia could offer.

It would be no easier to tell why the Orakzai decided on that course so suddenly than it would be to explain why Russia sent them there. Russia's diplomatic policy is what it always was—half Asiatic in its sinuous inception, and wholly secret in its working-out. Russia started the Second Afghan War on the principle, no doubt, that pickings may be had along the flanks of an embattled "friend;" and Russia sent three officers, with no written orders but

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with very definite instructions given them by word of mouth, to stir up the fiercest of the border-tribes and set them fighting on the side of the Afghans.

So the Russians, who spoke Pushtu perfectly, preached and preached, and promised. The Orakzai Pathans listened, and absorbed what presents they had brought with them. And word went down by devious but astonishingly rapid channels to Calcutta that the Orakzai were contemplating trouble.

Then came the secret-service men—not in hosts, or with a flourishing of trumpets, or with any discernible official backing. They filtered in, one lone man at a time, with orders in his head and nothing but his wits to help him execute them.

It was just before the arrival of a certain very sacred hadji, who could tell the best stories of any man the Orakzai had ever listened to, and could eat more than any man that they had ever seen, but who had a vast store of religious fervor and an autocratic way, that the mountaineers made prisoners of the Russians.

The Orakzai—like all Himalayan hillmen, and, for the matter of that, like nine-tenths of the world—are for themselves; first for their own individual selves, and then the Orakzai as a whole. They are absolutely first-class fighting-men along their own lines, when once worked up to it.

By religion and by birth and superstition and logic and predisposition and force of circumstance, and for many other valid reasons, they are robbers, first, last and all the time. They rob each other when there happens to be no one else to rob. But they prefer very much to rob outsiders, because that course is safer.

They are cunning and treacherous and most suspicious, so of course they are short-sighted simpletons. They made up their minds not to go to the help of the Afghans, because they reasoned that these Russians must have an ulterior motive in wanting them to do so. And they wanted first to find out what that ulterior motive was. The motive, they argued, must mean loot of some kind, and they wanted first to make certain that they, and not the Russians, would snaffle all that loot.

And, since they were not at all certain in their own minds that Russians were not another brand of Englishman, they decided to keep very quiet indeed about their prisoners. The reason for that was almost Western in its diplomatic naïveté. Peshawur and the other border-towns where British garrisons are kept made wondrous good hunting-grounds for men who needed rifles and would take a risk to get them. But sometimes, when Allah was not looking, a man got caught—caught in the act, and tried, and (hateful prospect!) hanged. Three prisoners, held in reserve against any such emergency, might prove very useful to exchange against a not-yet-executed border-thief.

So the hadji, who took such an interest in the tribal welfare, and who told such enthralling stories to the young men of the tribe and wielded such an influence with them, learned that there were prisoners. And he knew, as any man who understood the Orakzai must know, that whatever the prisoners had had was subdivided now among the captors. But all his efforts to get into the prison were frustrated, and all his questions were put aside or fenced with or unanswered.

He learned that the prisoners had papers with them and, as has been seen already, he procured the papers. But he had no idea yet who the prisoners might be, or what was their nationality, or how long, even, they had been prisoners. He knew only that they were locked up in an evil-smelling hut that was kept more closely guarded than a harem.

And the Russians, who were losing their health rapidly in the horrible confinement of their vermin-infested jail, were as much in the dark as any one as to the why and the wherefore of their imprisonment, or their prospects of release. They were mad-angry, penitent and helpless, all at the same time, and that is an uncomfortable combination.

BUT they were angrier yet and even more amazed when, at the customary hour for tossing in a mess of food to them, the door was opened and a native was thrown in. That, in their opinion, was the ultimate limit of degradation, and it would be difficult indeed to say which was the more discontented of the two parties.

The Russians felt outraged, and Yussuf Mahmoud felt afraid, and they glared at each other through the stifling gloom of

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the unventilated hut for probably an hour before either party spoke.

Then one of the Russian officers spoke to Yussuf Mahmoud in the Pushtu tongue, snarling at him harshly, with a view to emphasizing the obvious difference in the clay that they were built of. And, because he was frightened and had said too much before he was made prisoner, Yussuf Mahmoud did not answer him. So the Russian tackled him in Hindustani, of which he seemed to know a smattering.

Yussuf Mahmoud still said nothing.

But Russians are the greatest and glibbest linguists in the world, and it would be very difficult to find a Russian officer who could not make himself understood in at least half a dozen tongues. And, on the principle of using every medium he knew, the Russian spoke to him in English.

The effect was instantaneous. Yussuf Mahmoud babbled with joy. Hillman by birth or not, he had sense enough to know that where men spoke English, there at least was truth that could be counted on, and some square dealing. And, in the course of his eventful history, he had seen Englishmen fighting back to back in a tight place. He had been in one of those tight places—a foreigner, and a hireling—and he had not noticed any neglect on the Englishmen's part to save his reprehensible hide for him before they saved their own. They had shared their food with him when food was short, and they had always paid him his wages without deduction.

Though both of those things were ridiculously childish, and were based, no doubt, on hereditary mania, still, they were very useful habits to rely upon.

"Oh, sahib!" he babbled. "Are you, then, English? Sahib! Sahib! Will the troops not come to rescue us? Sahib! I will wait on you! I will be your servant! I will do all things that you say! Only protect me, sahib! Protector of the poor, I am a poor man, and innocent!"

"Hold your tongue!" the Russian ordered. "Now answer me these questions. Who are you, first?"

"Yussuf Mahmoud by name. Interpreter to Rodrick-sahib, who is camped on the level land beyond this hill. There is but the one hill between us and him, though it is a great hill, and broad."

"Who is this Rodrick-sahib?"

"Every man knows Rodrick-sahib! He is Government-official—most important, highly trusted. I am his interpreter—also highly trusted."

"How long has he been here?"

"But one day, sahib."

"Does he know where you are?"

"Nay, sahib, he does not know. These dung-heap robbers of Orakzai have no doubt already told him that I am a deserter, already far away on the road back to Hindustan."

"Has he troops with him?"

"Nay, sahib. And the Orakzai make plots to kill him. I heard them less than an hour ago, and because I pleaded for him and for the English—whom Allah cause to prosper!—they made me prisoner, and cast me into this place."

The Russian consulted with his two companions in whispers. They were in a quandary, those three. Even supposing that they could manage to send word to this British officer, how could they know that he had not already come into possession of their papers—that incriminating package giving details of their pilgrimage and of what they had preached to the hillmen; containing maps and information and enough evidence to hang a hundred men caught thus on English territory?

THE papers were not signed, except with a cabalistic scrawl, and they were not addressed. They could scarcely be used as evidence unless the men from whom they had been taken were taken too. If the three Russians could make their escape northward, the documents in the little oiled-silk package might prove very interesting and even useful to the Anglo-Indian Government, but they could not possibly be made a ground for diplomatic rupture. But how could they escape northward?

And how could any British officer ignore the fact that they were his country's enemies, should they contrive to send an appeal to him?

"If what this man says is true," said the senior of them. "It's even worse than it looks. We've been telling these infernal Pathans to take the field against the English. He says they're going to murder this British officer. We—and then our Government—will get the blame for that. At the best, he'll make us prisoners, and send us down to India for trial. At the worst

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—why, the worst is quite unthinkable!"

"In the meantime," said one of the others, "we're in an offal-trap that doesn't suit my sense of smell, or humor either, and we're getting sick. We can't be any worse off than we are, and we can't stop those papers from getting into English hands, supposing that they haven't been destroyed by these ignorant barbarians. We can't escape to the northward, and we can hold our tongues and deny all knowledge of those papers in case we're made prisoners. My vote is that, if we can manage it, we send an appeal for aid to this British officer, whoever he may be."

They agreed on that, after half an hour's discussion, during which they once or twice touched on the advisability of committing suicide. Their death, with a British officer so near to them, would have put the Anglo-Indian Government in an awkward predicament, they argued. A prompt demand for apology and compensation by the Russian Government, accompanied by hot denials of the authenticity of any evidence connecting them with the possibly captured documents, would prevent the English Government from taking the offensive.

But either their patriotism had wilted in the stagnant atmosphere of their jail, or else they realized that their argument was visionary and too far-fetched. At all events, they decided to run what risks might lie ahead of them or Russia, and to communicate with Rodrick if they could.

So they primed Yussuf Mahmoud carefully. They realized that it was far more probable that the interpreter would be released or get away or communicate with somebody than that they themselves would.

"If you get out of here," they ordered him, "you send word or take word to that Rodrick-sahib you speak of, that three Russian officers are prisoners here—you understand? Do you know what a Russian is? Say the word! No, you idiot! Russian! There, say it again. That's better. If we are rescued, owing to any message you may take, we will see to it that you are rewarded with sufficient money to make you independent for the rest of your life! Do you understand, you ruffian?"

"How much money, sahib?"

Even in that hour of darkest peril, the hillman-instinct could not be kept down. He had to bargain! The Russians conferred for a moment. They wanted to excite his cupidity without arousing unbelief, and they were in doubt as to the psychological amount to name.

"There are three of us here. We will see that you are paid one thousand rupees for each of us that reaches India alive."

Even in that fetid darkness of the prison, Yussuf Mahmoud's eyes could be seen to blaze. They were blazing still, in spite of the horrid fear that gripped him, when, at evening, the door opened suddenly, and an armed man summoned him, and he was led out to he knew not what fate.

The three Russians danced a wild fandango of a dance around the filthy hut, half crazed by the first small gleam of hope that had come to them in three long weeks. And Yussuf Mahmoud trembled at the knees, as a sick man trembles when he first gets out of bed. But neither Yussuf nor the Russians nor the man who led out Yussuf had the least idea what fate might be in store for any of them, or who just then was handling the strings of fate. They could have guessed a hundred thousand times, and not have come within a half-mile of the mark.

UP ON the hilltop, where the little stone hut perched like a roofed-in eery half-way to heaven, there had been another conversation between the head-man and the priest who had wielded so much influence.

"You see, O prince of head-men," said the hadji, patting the little oilskin packet that he held, "thy head—thy prince among heads—thy priceless jewel of a head is stuffed inside with bone and other odds and ends that Allah had no other use for. My head, on the other hand, has brains in it, of the kind that Allah gives to those he loves! But even I—who am wiser than thou art, as a fir-tree is greater than a blade of grass—can not read English. Allah—who is wiser than either of us—gave man his brains to use. I would use mine. I would decipher what is in this package. Therefore, if thy understanding can be made to grasp as much, it would be well that that interpreter whom thou hast made a prisoner should be brought up here to me, and that he should be left alone with me, and that he should read these writings out loud to me, to the end that I may use the knowledge doubtlessly contained in them."

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The fact that the reverend hadji could read English perfectly and that the documents were written, doubtless, in Russian and that he would have died a dozen deaths rather than break trust with his superior by opening the package, did not cause him to hesitate or wince or swallow. His words came as glibly and as earnestly as though he were preaching from the Koran. He could do that, too, when circumstances seemed to call for it—nor would even that sacrilege have made him wince.

"Thou wilt not let him break away from thee? I would not have him get back to this G-rrr-odd-rikk. The tribe would call me traitor."

"I would not either that he went back to G-rrr-odd-rikk! He is better where he is, and thy idea of questioning him when he has been with the three others for a day or two is a good one. Let him come into this hut of thine. And when I have finished with him, let him be led back again."

"It is good, hadji," said the head-man. "He shall be brought at once."

"And go thou," said the hadji, "and call thy younger men together and such others as are surely on thy side, and make arrangements for a durbar with G-rrr-odd-rikk to-morrow morning. Tell them that they and thou shall divide among them all his gifts, and say that I have said so. It will strengthen thy authority."

CHAPTER IX

"THROUGH JUNGLE AND VALLEY AND RIVER —GO!"

RODRICK'S heart was in his boots that evening, although he did his stiff-chinned Anglo-Saxon best not to show it. The silent pile of Sikaram had awed him until he found himself remembering scraps of religious poetry. And that, he knew, was a sign of decomposing courage. He was religious enough at any time, but his religion was a thing to live, not sentimentalize about, and his mental condition scared him more than his situation did.

There were no signs of the interpreter, or of any one who might bring news of him. No sick came even. The Orakzai seemed to have determined on a course of strict aloofness. And that, he knew, was usually a prelude to trouble, where hillmen were concerned. And trouble, as he was situated, could mean only one thing. There could then be only one problem left to solve —would death be quick or slow; by bullet or by knife or torture?

He set a double guard around the camp —unarmed, of course, for the only weapons that he had with him were his own small revolver and a sporting-rifle. But the hillmen sent him no more fuel, so there were no cheery camp-fires now at which the porters whom he placed on guard could toast their shivering legs. And he dared not send his men to cut fuel, for fear that that might start the threatening storm.

The baboo was useless. The little, frightened, comfort-loving man stayed in his tent. Rodrick thought that he was praying, but every now and then he caught him in the act of peering out between the flies, like a mouse that tests the air before it ventures out. Every time that he caught sight of Rodrick, he drew his head in again, as though he suspected that Rodrick might tell him off for guard-duty unless he did.

Rodrick walked the camp, pacing round and round and up and down past the watchmen, tirelessly. The only good that he was doing by it was to keep the watchmen all awake, and the only good that that could do would be to give them warning of their death, in case the Orakzai decided on a night rush. But he preferred to do it. It was better than sitting idle in his tent, and more like duty.

He wished that he could guess, or study out, or learn what his duty was.

It was after midnight, and just at the moment when he had nearly reached the end of one line of watchmen, and the eyes of all the watchmen on that side of the camp were on his back, native-wise, instead of where they should have been, that a dark form crept between two gaps in the drawn-out line, and dropped, like a graveyard specter, into the pitch-darkness of a hollow in the ground.

Rodrick turned and walked back again—and passed within a yard of where the specter lay. The moment that he had left the hollow place behind, the specter moved again. In the black hill-darkness he was all but invisible, and there was no light in the baboo's tent. But he crept, for all that, as a man who can either see without the aid of light, or who knows the road and could walk it blindfold.

He reached the tent with the silence and

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the speed with which a cloud-shadow travels on a hillside, and there he stopped and stooped and whispered.

"X.7193," he said in English.

"O.91," said the baboo promptly. The tent-fly moved a little, a gap appeared and a bearded, rag-and-skin-clad hillman slipped into the tent. The baboo closed the fly again and tied the strings.

"Give me thy message!" he ordered. "Quick!"

He spoke in Hindustani, and the whispered answer was given in the same tongue.

"There is nothing written. He told me that you would write. The Orakzai have three prisoners, who are Russian officers. They had papers. He has the papers, and will deliver them himself to whom he is ordered to deliver them. Now, for the next few days, he is busy watching, keeping the tribe divided and stirring up dissension in their midst, taking one side against the other. He says he can fool them, and hold them for a few days, but that then they will surely slay both him and all of you and their three prisoners. Send the news quickly!"

The baboo took out paper and a pen, and wrote with trembling fingers.

"Have you news of Yussuf Mahmoud, the interpreter?" he asked.

"He, too, is a prisoner."

"I will write that also."

"He gave me no message concerning Yussuf Mahmoud. He said, though, that you would give me clothing. My bones ache with the chill from the earth that I have slept on."

"How can I give thee clothing? Am I God? Or can I open bales in the darkness, making no sound nor being seen?"

"I have his word on it. He said it—that you would give me clothing."

The baboo was writing rapidly, using the cipher that he had memorized, and crowding what he had to write into the smallest compass possible. Presently he twisted up the sheet of foreign paper and slipped it, as on a former occasion, into a tiny oiled-silk envelope. He gave it to the strange messenger, who seemed to need no more instructions.

"I, then, must freeze!" exclaimed the baboo. "Who, then, is this dog of an imitation priest, that he should swear away my blankets from me? Why did he not give thee his blankets?"

"For the good reason that he has none," said the messenger.

"Take this one, then," said the baboo, dragging the top one off his bed. "And hasten! Get not into the blanket like a bug, to snore away my life and the lives of all these others by the wayside. Run! And throw away thy blanket if the weight of it hampers thy speed."

But the man who had turned back Rodrick's horse was no friend apparently of wordy argument. He had got his blanket and his written message. He knew how many miles lay between him and Peshawur. He knew who waited for him. And he knew the road.

He untied the tent-flies before the baboo could move to help him, and he slipped out with the silence of a shadow, belly to the earth, his breathing silenced by one corner of the blanket he had wrapped around him.

He lay still for a minute, until Rodrick started to patrol the far side of the camp with his back toward the direction of Peshawur. Then he began to move again, in little cautious spurts, stopping dead-still at the end of each to make sure that none of the watchmen saw him.

When he reached the far end of the camp he tossed a stone outward through the blackness and between two watchmen. As they poised themselves on the trembling *qui-vive*—their eyes straining from their sockets, and their ears twitching in the effort to detect another sound—he darted past them, and vanished into the outer blackness like a phantom dematerialized.

"It was nothing!" said one watchman to the other.

"Allah then be praised!"

But the baboo, peering between the flies of that small tent of his, was still much too frightened to offer thanks to any Providence, and still too suspicious of results.

"Whatever God there is," he muttered in Hindustani, "give that man legs! And give Rodrick-sahib brain enough to make no move! . . . And give me another blanket!" he added as an after-thought.

IN THE chill of the early morning, after the porters had collected sufficient scraps of wood and twigs to make some pretense of cooking breakfast,

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but while the pots were not yet more than simmering, a great deputation started down the hillside and debouched on to the level land in front of Rodrick's camp.

It was not only an early deputation. It was composed exclusively of younger men, and it was genuinely led on this occasion. Mohammed bin Suliman was out in front of it, stalking like a shepherd, instead of being crowded by a grudgingly submissive swarm of older men. These men, too, made no effort to conceal the fact that plunder, either given them or taken, was the goal of their ambition. But they were manifestly well in hand and obedient, for the present, to authority.

The head-man bowed, with a gesture that was a ludicrous compromise between dignity and self-assertiveness and would-be tact. He kept his rifle ready in the crook of his left arm, and with his right hand crossed above the stock. But his face showed symptoms of politeness.

"You will see that I have no fuel left," said Rodrick, pointing to the meager fires. "Is your hospitality exhausted?"

"I came for the durbar that you promised, and the present-giving."

"Can a man talk fairly in the cold?" demanded Rodrick. "Does generosity thrive best when a man's heart is sick within him from the mountain-chill? Nay! But I need my blankets. I must serve out three apiece to every porter in the camp!"

The head-man's face showed no sign of emotion or contrition, but he turned and gave a low-growled order. One of his men went off immediately.

"The women will bring more fuel," he said, turning to Rodrick again. "And now for the durbar! These that I have brought with me are all my friends, my men—the men of the tribe whose word, after mine, has weight. The others would have slain thee. I, and these with me, spared thee and thy followers. So we take all the gifts."

Rodrick, who was very cold and very hungry and very lonely, kept an iron grip on himself, and betrayed no slightest symptom of surprise. The candidness of the confession were surely enough to have broken down the nerve of any ordinary man. But he actually smiled.

"No man takes anything but what I give him," he answered promptly. "A durbar is a peaceable discussion among friends, and not a form of plundering. First shall come the durbar. Thou and I will speak, but bring up the rest that they may hear."

The head-man's thumb ran up and down the notches on his rifle-butt, and his crafty eyes narrowed.

"My authority," he said, "is paramount. What need is there to let the others listen? It is sufficient that they receive, each man, a gift. They have keen eyes—let them watch! Ears are for head-men and for counselors!"

Rodrick's sense of helplessness began to leave him. It was dawning on him that this absolutely selfish-minded savage stood to lose or gain as much as he himself did.

"It was of thy head-manship that I would talk with thee," he answered. "It is necessary, in order that the peace along the border-line may be preserved, that there should be here a real head-man, whose authority is quite unquestioned."

"Of a truth, I am that head-man! These here—" he inclined his head in the direction of the crowd behind him— "are my supporters."

"How long would they support thee," asked Rodrick, "if dire misfortune fell through any of thy leading? What if the thatch were burnt and the walls pulled down and the crops all trampled under?"

The head-man grinned nastily, showing his eye-teeth, and thumbing his rifle-butt again.

"Will these, these porters here, will they, then, fire the thatch?" he asked.

"No," said Rodrick, "they will not. I told thee, when we first had word together, that I had come to keep the peace, not break it. Here is my camp. Here are my men, unarmed. There—each man armed, and waiting in readiness behind thee—are thy men, and they are many. Slay! Loot! Give thou the order, and on thy head be it!"

THE head-man stared hard at him. This was sheer, rank, mad effrontery! And yet he could read no trace of anything resembling fear on Rodrick's face. Rodrick looked beyond him, and saw a long file of women, loaded up with wood, beginning to emerge through the opening in the cliff.

"Send those women back!" he ordered, pointing to them. "This durbar is not yet over! I take no gifts, even of fuel, from men who are not my friends!"

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"Of a truth, I am thy friend! Have I not spared thy life? Nay, take the fuel!"

"Do true friends need to spare each other? When men are friends, does the question of murder come up between them? Kill me, my friend, and loot! And wait then the result! Art thou so young that thou canst not remember how the troopers came, and what they did? Even I, who am younger than thou art, can remember it?"

"Is this vaporing of thine, the talk of friends?" the head-man asked.

"It is answer to thy talk, and a true answer," Rodrick smiled. He settled himself more comfortably into his chair, and lit a cigarette. He might as well die comfortably, he decided, and for the present he knew that his every movement was being watched, not only by the Orakzai, but by his own men as well. So he studied every attitude, and calculated it to produce the best effect on both.

"And there is another matter," he continued, when he had got his cigarette alight to his satisfaction. "That interpreter of mine. I lent him that he might carry up the presents that I gave thee, and so preserve thy dignity! Where is he? He has not returned."

"He ran away," said the head-man. "He ran back to Peshawur. There were blood-feuds here that he was afraid to meet."

"Have I told thee any lies?" asked Rodrick, who knew that the one thing the interpreter would hardly dare to do would be to run away alone.

He might have done it, but it was so improbable that he would bolt southward instead of to his own district in the north that presumption, at least, was fairly against the head-man.

The head-man did not answer him. He affected not to have heard the question, or else not to have understood it.

"Bring me my interpreter!" said Rodrick. "If he has run away, then thy men can overtake him. If he is still up in the village yonder, send him to me. When he is here, so that I know that thou art indeed my friend, then there will be a present-giving. You have my leave to go!"

"But—these men of mine. I promised them!"

"I, too, have promised! And, I promise this: If thou, as head-man, art indeed my friend, and if the things I have a right to ask—to ask as one just man from another—are done for me, the Government, whose servant I am, will be thy friend, and thy head-manship will be dependent on more than those men behind thee. There will be a present-giving later, in the afternoon, when I have had time and opportunity to sort out the gifts that I will give. It will be a little present-giving—one gift each, for each of these thy men. You have my leave to go."

Rodrick had no notion what might lie behind the head-man's hesitation, but he did detect symptoms of embarrassment, and he was quick to make the most of them.

If the head-man had dared to loot the camp, he would have done so at the first suggestion of defiance. There was little doubt of that. Therefore there was something, argued Rodrick, that was working for him in the dark. And if he was to be killed, he preferred to die with dignity. He stood to gain nothing by cringing to a savage.

The head-man was quick to realize that Rodrick's present attitude was quite uncompromising, so he turned and swaggered back to where his adherents waited. Rodrick could not hear what he said to them, but he evidently had authority enough to procure obedience.

There was very little argument, and they went off almost immediately in a cluster, looking, judging by their demeanor, as though the head-man had made them promises out of all proportion to what Rodrick had said. As the head-man left, he waved his arm, and the women brought their loads of fuel and dumped them in a pile not far from Rodrick's tent. And Rodrick grinned, as he watched the retiring hillmen, and saw the good effect that the arrival of the fuel had produced on his own men.

"I wonder if that's what Americans call 'bluff,' or whether I've been wise, or whether they've gone back to turn the tribe out," he muttered. "The worst of it is that if a man does make a decent show of nerve on a mission of this kind, there's no one to report the fact to his superiors. A fellow can't report himself, hang it!"

But up on the hilltop, in the hut where a hadji had been waiting, the head-man gave a true account of every word that he had said, and every answer Rodrick had given him.

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"I would better kill him!" said the head-man. "There will be less trouble that way, and quicker plundering!"

"I forget," said the hadji. "Did I finish cursing thee? Did I tell thee how the troops should come, and come quickly, and wreak vengeance on the tribe, and depose thee? Wait, while I curse thee properly!"

"Nay! Hold thy evil tongue! Nay, hadji! What have I left undone that thou hast said?"

"Thou hast forgotten many things. For two days, or for three days—until I tell thee—keep away from this man G-rrr-oddrikk. Send him fuel daily, but keep away! Wilt thou produce his interpreter for him? Then, keep away!"

"But the presents, hadji, and the men who clamor for them?"

"Tell them—I too will tell them—that after three days there shall be thrice as many presents, and that there shall be happenings that will make thee head-man beyond all argument. But keep away! Stay here, on the hilltop, and control thy men."

CHAPTER X

"AND THERE WAS MOUNTING IN HOT HASTE"

IN THE Peshawur bungalow where "they" were wont to meet, facing a dazzling road, and adjusting from time to time the gold-rimmed *pince-nez* that kept slipping because of the heat, sat H. M. Bagge, her Majesty's Provincial Commissioner. He was evidently tired, and as evidently tortured by the fever, but he managed to retain distinctly more than a vestige of the air of calm authority.

He turned over paper after paper, scrawling his signature, usually in triplicate, on the almost endless documents that every Government designs to use up the valuable energy of front-rank men. Once in each five minutes he would toss a bundle of them into a basket at his side, look up wearily and call to the orderly who stood outside.

"Any sign of him?"

"Not yet, sir."

Then Bagge would resume his writing, and the orderly would stare alternately into the distance and back again to a weird-looking figure of a hillman who squatted on the wide veranda. The hillman had a blanket wrapped about him, but it hid neither his mud-matted hair and beard, nor his long straight knife that was fastened to his thigh nor his skin-and-rag-made clothing.

After a while the orderly walked straight into the office, and saluted the Commissioner.

"He's in sight now, sir, riding along the road about a mile away."

"Show him in, then, the moment that he gets here, and close the door behind him. Admit no one else."

"Very good, sir."

"Riding" was somewhat of a euphemism for what the man in sight was doing. It was only a few minutes later that the sound of steel-shod horse's feet was heard, hammering out a devil's tattoo on the sun-baked road. The noise established two facts: He was a British officer of sorts, for the natives do not shoe their horses; and he was quite regardless of his neck. He seemed regardless, too, of the ordinary rules of etiquette, for he tossed his reins to the orderly, and hurried into the Commissioner's sanctum unannounced.

"YOU sent for me, sir?"

He closed the door behind him as he spoke.

"I did, Charlie. Where the —— were you?"

"Just riding, sir. Trying to get the confounded stiffness out of this leg of mine."

"How is the leg?"

"Dandy, sir! All over but the shouting and the sticking-plaster. The 'vet' certified me as fit for service again last night. I'm hoping to start back to the front again within a week."

"I hope, then, that you won't be too seriously disappointed. I've got something else for you."

"Anything you say, sir!"

There was a note of disappointment in the voice, though. This plainly was a man who had soldiering next his heart.

"There's a secret-service man just in from Sikaram. Know where that is? Orakzai Pathan district. Young Rodrick is up there."

"Sigurd Fitzalan?"

"Yes."

"He's a good man. Know him well."

"He has no idea whatever that I'm in touch with what is happening up there. News has reached me that three Russian

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officers are held prisoners there, close to where he is, by the Orakzai. Rodrick doesn't know it. Nor does he know that the Orakzai are contemplating killing him."

"What are the Russians doing there?"

"Same old game. Just making trouble—stirring up the tribes against us, on the heads-I-win-and-tails-you-lose principle. If they succeed, Russia encroaches while we're busy smoothing things out again. If they fail and get killed, Russia demands indemnities and things, and takes advantage of our diplomatic predicament to make more encroachments. We've suspected for some time that something of the sort was going on, but didn't know for certain."

"Well, sir?"

"The Orakzai are on the flank of our columns going up the Khaibar. They could cut our communications if they chose. But until now, and for more than a year past, they have not given us a valid excuse—that would do for Parliament, you understand—for occupying their territory."

Charlie Trevelyan rubbed his hands together, and straightened up perceptibly.

"I'm listening, sir."

"The Russians, of course, must be rescued immediately, and treated as honored guests. I have received word that all the information they have collected and a full record of their campaign is in our hands, so they're harmless, which is how we want them. I have an idea that Rodrick may have inserted quite a diplomatic wedge up there, especially as one of the best of the secret-service men is working hard for him. I've some faith in Rodrick. I want you to get up there to his assistance as fast as horse-flesh will let you!"

"Alone, sir?"

"No. There's rather less than one troop of the Guides here, made up of convalescents and new drafts. Then I can let you have Norwood, and twenty-five of his policemen, all well-mounted. And there's about a troop and a half of Sikhs, and a troop of Rajputs. The orders have gone out already, and they're paraded now, waiting for you. They've sixty rounds of ammunition each, and I've ordered out a good-sized train of baggage-mules for you, so as to spare the horses as much as possible and save you the necessity of wasting good time foraging."

"Sounds interesting, sir!"

"It is! You're to ride hell-bent-for-leather, and, once you get in sight of Sikaram, you're to keep a bright lookout for signals. One of the secret-service men will be on the watch for you, and he'll give you all the facts and probably some good advice. Then act! Use your own discretion, but get those Russians out alive, and back up Rodrick! Don't let Rodrick think he's superseded, for he isn't. Back him up, and send back word if you want more troops to help you. We'll hold that country for good, now that I've got a ready-made excuse for doing it! Here's a letter for young Rodrick—take it with you. That's all. Now go! Good luck ride with you!"

"Good-by, sir, and thank you!"

"Not at all, Charlie. You're the best man I could pick, my boy. Be off, now! Your men are waiting for you."

Charlie Trevelyan saluted, and retired through the doorway like a spurred and booted demon, passing the orderly and the other man who waited in a streak. The man who could crook his finger, and call up a thousand men such as Captain Charlie, and send them, if he chose to, on a thousand different errands of his own devising, went on signing papers—signing them, and turning them face-downward in the basket—and helping himself at intervals to tiny doses of quinine.

"I'd give something to be in young Trevelyan's shoes!" he muttered.

He wrote for about ten minutes before a disturbance at the door attracted his attention. Then suddenly the door burst open, and the strange-looking scarecrow of a hillman struggled in, held back by the panting orderly.

"Let him come in!" said Bagge, and the orderly let go, but stood beside him, as though he feared he was some assassin.

"Leave him alone with me," said Bagge, and the orderly went out through the door again, plainly expressing on his face the opinion that the Commissioner was mad.

"What is it?" asked Bagge in Hindustani, the moment that the door had closed. "What? Go back again with him? Why, aren't you tired? Don't you want a night's rest? Eh, what? Said you were to return at once, did he? Bless the man! Why, you've come a hundred miles at top speed. You can't do a hundred back again. Eh, what's that? This quinine has made me deaf! Want a horse, eh? Well—that can be managed. Take this."

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He wrote a note, and signed and sealed it.

"You saw that sahib who came in here just now, and went out again in such a hurry? He's going up to Sikaram at once. You'll find him over on the parade-ground —know where that is? Very well. Find him and give him that note and he'll give you a horse and take you back with him. Wait a minute! Don't you want some money? No? Rather wait until you get back here again? Oh, very well. Salaam."

The hillman went as quickly as Trevelyan had done, and with as little ceremony, and H. M. Bagge continued writing as before. Presently, though, he left off writing, lit a cigar and thought.

"Whatever they may say," he reflected, "and they do say lots of things, they've got to admit—or would admit, if they knew about it—that we've raised and trained the loyalest thing there is in the way of secret servants!"

CHAPTER XI

"ALLAH READ THE RIDDLE!"

YUSSUF MAHMOUD, the interpreter, found himself conducted swiftly through the mazes of a third degree of a kind that was new in his experience. The green-turbaned hadji who cross-questioned him, and glowered at him through the gloom of the hilltop hut, seemed able to see behind his mind and detect and tangle up a lie almost before he gave it utterance. In less than ten minutes he was afraid to lie for the first time in his unregenerate existence.

Then he began to tell the truth.

He admitted all that he had said to the congregated hillmen. He admitted that he had lied when he said that he could lead a raid to Peshawur which could not fail, and he admitted, too, that he had had no such intention. He had only wanted to escape. Then he described the Russian prisoners, and what their plans were, and what instructions they had given him.

"And now, O holy one," he added, when the priest had come to an end at last of questioning, "now that I have truly told the truth, allow me to run to Rodrick-sahib, and bear the message to him. Surely the truth is worth some favor in return?"

"Favor?" said the priest. "Aye, it is worth many favors! But, only one can I grant thee yet. I can give thee thy choice of two, but thou must choose. Come with me."

He led the wondering Yussuf out of the hut, round behind the hut, and stood him where the cliff ran sheer for upward of five hundred feet to a mass of jagged rocks below.

"There is thy choice!" he told him. "Thou mayst jump, and then run anywhere thy fancy leadeth thee. Or thou mayst continue to enjoy the hospitality of yonder palace in the valley. Say not that I was ungenerous!"

"But, hadji——"

"Choose, thou sweet-tongued worshiper of truth and loyalty! Let thy selfless instincts guide thee! Listen to the voice of virtue calling to thee from the caverns of thy stainless soul! Choose and be quick!"

"What choice is there?" said Yussuf Mahmoud, turning from the cliff. "Thou art a strange priest, to change thy talk thus, from dark to light, and from light to dark again."

"Aye, I am a strange priest! Take him away!"

Three armed ruffians seized him, and hurried him along, persuading him to show his speed by dint of rifle-butts applied untenderly to tender parts of his anatomy.

"A strange priest I am indeed!" said the hadji to himself, as the sound of footsteps grew more distant. "Here am I, who am no priest, and in three weeks I wield more power here than the head-man of the tribe. Here am I, who am no Englishman, and I do more than any hundred Englishmen to help their cause. I, who am a pauper, shut my eyes to opportunities of loot. I could rule this tribe. I could be king of it within a year. I, to whom life is sweet, risk my life. I blaspheme, and I lie—yet these hillmen trust me to their undoing; and they who pay me, trust me to their gain. May Allah read the riddle—Allah, to whom all riddles are as writing on the wall!"

He seemed puzzled for a little while, as any man might well be in his predicament. He sat down on the ledge of stone that hung five hundred feet above the rocks and reasoned matters out.

"Now as to the package that I have, I keep," he muttered to himself. "Both for my honor's sake, and also because I was so ordered, it must be kept. News must go

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this night to Peshawur. That much is certain, and there is but one man of the five I have whom I can trust to take it and not lose time on the road. The news must be written — therefore I must communicate with O.91. I have no means of writing. Now, shall Rodrick-sahib know? If I send him word, what then? He is English—British of the British. Therefore a blundering fool! Therefore he will stir up such a hornets' nest within an hour that all my scheming will fall flat around me, and we shall all be dead before the troops can come. Nay, Rodrick-sahib shall not know! I go find my messenger, and trust to Allah, who is the God of Luck as well as other things, to keep that same Rodrick quiet!"

SO IT was that X.1793 had been sent crawling into Rodrick's camp, and had subsequently started hotfoot for Peshawur; and the man who pretended he had been to Mecca, and who could eat so much and lie so craftily, continued on his course of keeping the tribe at loggerheads. Men were filtering in by dozens at a time from the outlying villages, and there were other priests among them who were jealous of him, so his task grew hourly more dangerous and difficult.

One-half of the tribe was for butchering Rodrick and his followers, and despatching the Russian prisoners as well. The other half, led by Mohammed bin Suliman the head-man, was for waiting a little while. To them the hadji darkly hinted that Rodrick would be likely to prove a useful friend before long. Within three days he had the whole tribe utterly by the ears. Mohammed bin Suliman and the younger men, acting on his advice, went down again to Rodrick's camp and made themselves agreeable, and received such a bewildering pile of gifts to add to what they had already that the rest were jealous of them.

And, to save his own new-won position and keep his personal supporters in good temper with him, the head-man forbade the rest so much as to approach Rodrick. That led to hot words, followed by a well-aimed shot from Mohammed bin Suliman, who seldom missed. The runner-up in tribal favor for the head-manship stretched out his length along the floor of the council-house. There was a scramble for the door, and the click of many hammers and breech-blocks, some wild shooting, and a rush for cover—and there was a real, red, tribal blood-feud in full swing.

There was not a man there but was related in some way or another to either Mohammed bin Suliman or the man whom he had shot.

Down in the stone prison in the valley, there was another argument proceeding, of a rather different kind. Yussuf Mahmoud, the interpreter, had been so frightened and so mentally mishandled by the priest that he actually told the truth to his fellow prisoners. Since he had not the slightest notion as to who the hadji actually was, he gave them no hope that any message from them would be likely to reach Anglo-India.

They had no affection for Yussuf Mahmoud, and they made no secret of the fact. But they were also men of more than ordinary acumen; and, after a whole night's argument in which they talked things over from every possible point of view, they came to the inevitable conclusion that if any of the three escaped it would only be to perish almost instantly.

"What," they reasoned, "had been the fate of all their camp-servants, who had bolted to a man at the first sign of trouble? Had any single one survived?"

But this man Yussuf Mahmoud was a hillman born, and would not have so very far to run in order to reach Rodrick's camp. There was a chance that if he could get out he could bear a message. So, very reluctantly, and after thoroughly explaining to him that they acted from no love for him, they decided to give him what chance they could.

They had neither tool nor weapon; nothing but their hands. But there were four of them, counting Yussuf, and they found that if they kicked him sufficiently he could be made to do the work of two or three men. They were hampered by the gloom, and by the fear of being overheard, and by the awful hardness of the stamped-down earth they had to deal with, so what they did took them five whole days. But in the end they dug a hole from a place near the back wall right through to the open air, going deep down to avoid the foundations. And late on the fifth night they cautioned the interpreter again, made him rehearse his instructions, sent him through the hole and covered up the opening behind him.

Later still that night, almost at dawn in

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fact, Yussuf Mahmoud crawled and limped and stumbled into Rodrick's camp, and was given hot coffee, and was coaxed and cuffed and threatened back into enough self-possession to enable him to tell his story.

He added long chapters to it from his own imagination, but he told enough truth to prove to Rodrick that there were three Russian prisoners within three miles of him —within a mile, in fact, if he could have quarried to them through the rock.

CHAPTER XII

THE LETTER OF HIS ORDERS

EVEN Rodrick, who was nothing if not plucky, dared not make a move before the day broke. The chances of an unarmed man among those hills were slight enough by daylight, but in the dark the risks were tripled. So he sat down in his chair before a camp-fire, and studied out the situation.

This much was plain. The reason why Bagge had sent him up there was now in front of him, if he could see it. Some other things were obvious, and some were not. Why had the Commissioner not told him what he might expect?

"Because," he argued with himself, "I should then have pushed my nose into a wasps' nest. He didn't want me to know just then. No, that's not it! He wasn't ready. No, that won't do either, because in that case he wouldn't have sent me. Very well, he can't have known himself!"

He tried another line.

"Suppose that he suspected? And wasn't sure yet, and didn't want me to push my nose in and make trouble, but did want to have a Johnny-on-the-spot in case? Bagge suspected something, and didn't know. Where are we now? How was he to find out? How was I to find out? It looks as though I wasn't meant to find out! No, that can't be it—why—who—what the—now I wonder! Was that scarecrow that stopped me in the hills and turned me back —was he a secret-service man, I wonder? I'll bet Bagge knows already!"

He began to glow all over with the thought of action. His patience had shown signs of giving out of late, and he had been hard put to it to control himself in camp. His brain began to think faster.

"Where does that lead to? Is Yussuf Mahmoud a secret-service man as well? He's too careful of his own skin. No. Yussuf Mahmoud's bringing me the information is the merest accident."

That line was leading him nowhere evidently, so he cast again.

"What has all that shooting meant up in the hills for the past two days? Where's the head-man? It looks to me, it looks very much to me, as if the secret-service men had stirred up some sort of trouble up there. It looks very much like that to me! The head-man didn't seem very certain of his head-manship and—I wonder if that's it? Is it civil war up there?"

He was tingling now from head to foot, and not the least bit frightened or lonely, as he had felt so often since he came there. He was beginning to feel like a man who really had a job in front of him.

"Bagge sent the secret-service men here first, and then sent me, meaning to send troops if they were needed. Why me at all? I've got it! So that, if there did turn out to be Russians here, and they were in trouble, they might appeal to me and couldn't say afterward that we made no effort to protect foreigners.

"Somehow, that doesn't seem quite right either. I'm here to do something! I've got to get to the bottom of this! Let's try again!

"This country is on the flank of the British Army. Now we're getting nearer, I believe! Bagge, and some one bigger than Bagge even, wants to occupy these hills. But they've been told from home to cut down expenditure.

"Now then! Bagge heard that there was trouble brewing—a first-class, A-number-one excuse. Excuse enough for sending a civilian officer to keep the peace. No doubt at all, the secret-service men have orders to protect me, and to send word to Peshawur the moment I'm in serious danger. And, anyhow, I expect old Bagge took a risk. I'm only a youngster, who doesn't matter much. Good for Bagge!

"But—I've got strict orders to keep the peace! In other words, he doesn't want a row if he can help it, but he does want these hills. I'm to remember the letter of my orders, and—don't forget that!—and the spirit of them.

"If those Russians get killed, that would mean anything but peace. It would mean an unpleasantness with Russia too. And

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there's been shooting in the hills for two days past, and that's not peace. That's a blood-feud probably, started by the secret-service men.

"Bagge can't have known about these Russians for long, or the troops would have been here by now. He'd jump at an excuse like that for sending an armed force up here, and besides, it'd be only common decency.

"Even now, I don't see what I'm here for.

"Wait, though! Bagge couldn't know in advance what luck the secret-service men would have in stirring up trouble. I don't suppose he told them to stir up any. I'll bet he sent me here in case they did.

"I see it! I'm here to take official action, in case there turned out to be Russians, as Bagge probably suspected, and in case there was trouble of any kind before the troops arrived. There *is* trouble, for I've heard it for the last two days. I'm pretty sure that there's faction-fighting going on, and that's not peace. I'm to keep the peace. Consequently I'm to interfere. I wasn't to interfere in any tribal quarrels, but I've got a plausible excuse for thinking that the Russians may be involved in this; and I'll bet Bagge counted on somebody telling me about the Russians anyhow. He'd argue that I couldn't be up here for long without hearing about them if there were any.

"He insisted so strongly on my being here as a 'peaceful penetrant' to save his own face and the Viceroy's—so as to have a perfectly good story to send home to Whitehall. He insisted on my displaying tact, and he knew I'd got tact, and that's why he picked me! And, tact in this case is——

"What do I gain, or will he gain, if I interfere now? The troops can't be far away. It's a big risk, because, if they kill me, there'll have to be an expensive little war which nobody wants. I've got it! I'll be —— if I haven't! By the great Lord Harry, if old man Bagge isn't the downiest old bird in Asia, I'll resign. This is all planned out, and I'm Johnny-on-the-spot to take advantage!"

THE dawn was just beginning. There was a rosy tint flickering and growing on the peak of Sikaram, and an eagle was already circling slowly with a view to breakfast.

"Boy!" he shouted. "Boy! Bring my horse! Hurry, now! No, wait a minute!"

He realized that his excitement was carrying him away, and he took a good hard pull at himself.

"Wait. Feed him first, and then bring him. And get me some breakfast."

RODRICK took the right-hand track on this occasion when he reached the place where the hill-road forked. He could not have told exactly why he did it, unless that it seemed broader, and consequently less likely to lead into an ambush. However, there was nothing much to choose between them in that particular.

He had ridden up the path about a hundred yards, or possibly a little more, watching the sharp edge of the cliff above him carefully and leaving the going to his horse, when he heard quick footsteps and heavy breathing from behind. He turned, and reined his horse.

"Ride on, sahib!" said a voice.

So he rode on. A man who spoke in English among these ghastly hills must be a friend.

"Don't look round, sahib!"

So he did not look round. He urged his laboring horse up the zigzag trail, and kept his eyes ahead of him, until he passed a shallow cave, whose upper edge projected outward above the track.

"Now, sahib, make believe to rest the horse. No! Don't look round!"

Rodrick reined in the horse, patted him and bent as though to see what might be the matter with his girth. In that way he could see who spoke to him without appearing to look. The man who had followed him was none other than he of the green turban who had received quinine from the baboo. He had slipped under the protecting ledge above the cave, and was standing upright, almost at Roderick's saddle-bow.

"They have seen you, sahib, from above, and they wait for you. They have not seen me."

"Well? Who are you?"

"Your servant! Listen, sahib! I have stirred this tribe into two factions, till they fought like wildcats."

"Why?"

"I had orders. I was to pave the way."

"Go on!"

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"I was not to apply to you, or inform you, except in case of need. There is now need."

"Go on. I'm listening."

"The troops that were to come, sahib, will be here presently—they must come presently! I sent word in good time and by the hand of the best man that I had. They will not come by the road that you took, for that man of mine had orders to come back with them, and show them a better way."

"I know the way they'll take. Go on."

"There are Russians here; they are prisoners."

"I know it."

"How, sahib? How do you know it?"

"My interpreter escaped. He came to me this morning before daybreak, and told me!"

"Then the dog had some use after all! He saved me a mile of running!"

He of the green turban crept stealthily beyond the cover of the cave, and peered about him. Then he crept in again.

"It were better, sahib, to dismount. See, there is a stone there in your horse's shoe. So, that is better! It is a stubborn stone, and comes not easily away. So! Until yesterday, I was the great man on these hills. Now I am fallen. They fought, and then one came to fight on the side of Mohammed bin Suliman, the head-man, whose friend I have been, and that man recognized me! He had been to the South, and had seen me busy on another matter. So then, last evening, there was a truce-making. Runners were sent, and a durbar was proclaimed. Long before dawn this morning they began to come, each man with his white stone in his arm. The stones are not visible from here, but there they lie, on the hilltop above you. There are five hundred at the very least, five hundred men, all armed, and others come."

"Where?"

"On the hill above you. I ran for my life, and hid. But I have other men here with me, and they watched and brought me word. What they discuss is this: They offer the unquestioned leadership to Mohammed bin Suliman on one condition—that you and your men and the Russians die. Mohammed bin Suliman hesitates, for he hates to surrender to the rest. He has no love for you, but he loves his own authority, and fears to show any sign of weakness. With him are the young men, and against him are the rest. They will settle everything within an hour or two, and in the end he must give in, if only because he is outnumbered, and because he befriended me who have been shown to be a fraud. Within two hours, or less, the Russians will be shot and your camp will be plundered, unless you act."

"So far, so good," said Rodrick. "What do you propose?"

"This, sahib. There is but one way. Ride on! Go up to them, and take Mohammed bin Suliman's part. Raise some fresh point for discussion. Demand the Russians. Demand anything. Make them talk! They will make you prisoner surely. They may kill you. But if you stay there any longer in your camp below and do nothing, they will just as surely kill you and your men. I have done all I can. They would have killed you when they first caught sight of you and your column but for my arguments to Mohammed bin Suliman, who was not yet acknowledged leader. Now I can do no more, and Bagge-sahib promised me that there would be a sahib here who could act like a man if it were needed."

"What are you going to do?" asked Rodrick.

"I, too, have a plan, sahib. The troops must now be very close indeed, and nearly all the fighting-men are here. Even the watchmen have come in from the sangas. I have a splendid plan. Go, sahib, and let them make you prisoner, and work for time."

"Funny," said Rodrick, "but that's just what I intended! I'm glad, though, to have got the lay of the land first. So-long, whatever your name is!"

"Salaam, sahib! And should the troops be late——"

"Why, then it's good-by," said Rodrick.

"Good-by, sahib! We two, at the least, will have done our duty!"

"We'll have tried to, anyhow," said Rodrick.

THE man in the green turban slunk back into the cave, and Rodrick made a show of having pulled the stone out. Then he mounted and rode on, without another glance behind him. It seemed like an almost endless corkscrew, winding up to heaven, that mountain-trail. But long before he reached the summit, he

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knew that he was watched. He could even hear voices. And, when he reached a level stretch of ground at last, he was not at all surprised to find his bridle seized.

No hand was laid on him as yet, but two armed ruffians led his horse toward a long, low stone building, outside the wall of which there squatted a crowd of hillmen, each man with his rifle held above his knees. The crowd was divided in two portions, facing each other. In front of the smaller division squatted Mohammed bin Suliman, looking not quite at his ease. Almost every rifle of the larger division moved restlessly as Rodrick was led nearer, but no one said a word.

Rodrick dismounted, and the two men promptly led his horse away.

"Mohammed bin Suliman," he said, "I thought that we two were friends?"

The head-man answered nothing, but looked, if possible, a trifle more uncomfortable.

"Why, then, is my horse seized in this manner?"

"Why did you come?" the head-man asked. "Were you invited?"

"I came because news reached me. I have learned that you hold three white men prisoners. I have come to ask you for those white men."

He spoke in Pushtu, and he spoke out loud, so that every man who wanted to could hear him.

"Shoot him!" said some one in the larger division of the crowd.

"Aye, shoot him! What does he here?"

"Listen, Mohammed bin Suliman!" said Rodrick. "Shoot me, and I swear to you, on my honor, and as one man to another, and by that array of white stones on the hill-brow, that my Government will exact such vengeance as this tribe has never experienced as yet! On the other hand, give me up those Russians and my Government will stand your friend. You shall be head-man, then, in real earnest."

"Beat him in the mouth!" said some one. "Beat the boaster in the mouth!"

"Nay, bring up the three! Stand them together, and let them all die together!"

"Aye! Make them all jump to their death!"

"Mohammed bin Suliman, wilt thou in truth be chief! Then order the slaying! Else——"

There was an ominous silence after the last man spoke.

"Bring up the three!" said the head-man, after a minute's deliberation.

He was obviously weakening, but not quite surrendering as yet. He had his own prestige to think of, and what he might have to do he meant to do with some show of having his own way.

"We will ask them certain questions that I have in mind. I will ask them, and the tribe shall listen, and then we will decide."

"Ask! But the decision is already made!" said some one. The larger section laughed.

"There is no decision made, save when I have given it!" said the head-man, and the larger section laughed again.

A dozen of the younger men ran off to bring the Russians. While they were gone the sections argued, throwing repartee and insult back and forth and snarling until Rodrick thought that there would be a pitched battle before the Russians came. The prisoners, weak from their unhealthy confinement, took a long time climbing up the hill, and it was nearly an hour before they were lined up beside Rodrick.

"I don't know whether I can get you fellows out of this," he whispered, "but I'm here to try! Don't answer me, but listen."

"They speak to one another!" yelled somebody. "Separate them! Stand them far apart!"

"Nay!" said the head-man. "Let them speak! Then we will ask this G-rrr-odd-rikk what the others said."

"Bah! Ask of a wolf what the pack said! Slay them! Over with them! Now, art thou in truth a head-man, or *wert* thou head-man? Choose!"

"I would first ask questions."

"We believe that thou art a traitor to the tribe!"

"Nay, I am no traitor!"

"Prove it!"

"Aye! Let him prove that he is no traitor! Let him give the order for their death, not we!"

"Take my advice, and don't," said Rodrick, without the least trace of resentment, or anything in fact but quite calm, judicious sahibdom. "Let my blood, and the blood of these men, be on their heads, not yours, Mohammed bin Suliman!"

"I am for making him prisoner as well," said the head-man. "Then we will hold them all four for ransom."

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"Traitor!" howled the opposition. "Over with them! Over the cliff!"

THERE came a rush, that neither the head-man nor his adherents dared lift a finger to prevent. Rodrick and the Russians were seized and forced backward, until they stood, all four of them in line, on the edge of the sheer precipice behind.

"Now, jump!"

"Don't jump!" said Rodrick beneath his breath.

He had noticed something that nobody else had heard as yet.

"While there is life, there is hope," said the nearest Russian, in his best Ollendorfian English. "No, my friend, if I go over here, I must first be pushed!"

There were more than two hundred rifles leveled at them, and not a barrel wavered; not one but had an eye that looked along it, and a finger crooked and pressed against the trigger. But suddenly Mohammed bin Suliman found his voice, and shouted:

"Hold! There is some one coming. He is shouting. Listen, first!"

"Nay, over with them!"

Rodrick looked sideways, and saw smoke rising in the distance—smoke and flame. He heard a man come running up the hill-path, shouting as he ran. The Orakzai looked too, and saw the smoke. A second later a hillman rushed out on to the level, and flung himself between the crowd and the four prisoners.

"Peace!" he commanded. "There are horsemen come! Rajputs, and Sikhs, and Guides! They are here already!"

"Over with them, then! Over before the horsemen reach us! Out of the way, or thou goest too!"

"Nay, hold! These horsemen are commanded by a devil, worse than any devil out of hell, and the priest—the false hadji—is there with him, advising him. He came after daylight on the farthest outer village—after your fighting-men had all come to this durbar. The village was unguarded, and he surrounded it, lest any might escape to bear the news. Then came the hadji, running, and the hadji talked with him.

"Then burned he the village, and took with him all the women and the little children. He holds them prisoners. And thus he says—stroking thus at the hair upon his upper lip—so says he, 'Go thou up to the hilltop yonder, where the white men are, and say that I hold here nine and thirty prisoners. Say that I will give back my prisoners for theirs in fair exchange. But tell them that unless they bring me all four of their prisoners here alive, and very shortly, I will skin these children, living, one by one!' So said he—this devil-man. Shall the children die, my brothers?"

There was a pause, dead silence, while the hillmen thought it out. One of their few virtues is a love of children. And they are wonderfully credulous. They quite believed that the British officer would carry out his threat.

Suddenly Mohammed bin Suliman's voice was raised again.

"Did I not say that it were well to wait?" he sneered. "I, that you call a traitor—did I not warn ye?"

"Let him bring his prisoners to us," suggested somebody, "and we will make the exchange up here."

"Nay!" said the messenger. "I suggested that. But he said 'the exchange will be made here, in the presence of my men and under cover of their rifles.' He said, too, 'Send down your head-man, that I may talk with him.' "

"I go, then," said Mohammed bin Suliman. "I will arrange this matter. I, who already warned ye, will exchange these prisoners against his."

Followed by his men, he stalked over to Rodrick and the Russians, and none of the larger contingent seemed any longer disposed to thwart him.

"Remember," he whispered in Rodrick's ear. "I always was thy friend! Through it all I constantly befriended thee. It's I who am head-man."

"I'll remember what I remember!" answered Rodrick. "Have my horse brought, please. Thank you. Now, help two of those gentlemen to mount him, one behind the other! They're weak from the disgusting treatment that you've given them.

"Sorry I can't mount all three of you," he said to the other Russian, as they started down the hill, followed by a swarm of arguing hillmen.

IN LESS than half an hour Rodrick and Captain Charles Trevelyan were shaking hands in front of the leveled rifles of three troops of cavalry.

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"Seems I came just in the nick of time, old man!" said Trevelyan. "Glad, I'm sure! Now, if you'll wait just one minute, I'll count out four women in exchange for you and these three gentlemen."

Rodrick smiled and the Orakzai murmured as the four least lovely women were marshaled out and pushed toward their waiting kinsmen.

"But the others?" said a voice. "The children, and the other women?"

"I said a fair exchange!" Trevelyan answered. "Prisoner for prisoner! Now, give me hostages, and you can have your brats. I don't want 'em, or the women either."

"Wait!" said Rodrick. "I've an idea."

"So've I! I've a letter for you. I've an idea it's your appointment as regular political officer to this district. There's to be no withdrawal this time. I'm to send for more troops if I think we need 'em."

"I don't think we'll need 'em!" answered Rodrick. "This tribe is in two factions. This man, here, is the proper head-man. Take hostages from the opposing faction, and that'll help us back him up. Keep him as head-man, and we've half of the tribe, at least, behind us."

"Good! You do the talking, will you? I'm a duffer at this lingo!"

Rodrick argued for about ten minutes, and finally the exchange of hostages against the women and children was effected.

"Did you think of that idea of capturing the children?" he asked Trevelyan. "Deuced clever of you, I think."

"Not I. This weird-looking gentleman in the faded green turban thought of that. But, I say—seems to me it was awfully clever of you to get the tribe divided into factions in that way. No wonder Bagge picked you to handle this job!"

"I didn't do a thing," said Rodrick, "not one thing! The same identical man in the green turban did that too. I'm going to try to keep him on here. Yes, this is my appointment. Dunno why, though. Dunno what I've done. Hi! You! You from Mecca! I want you to stay up here and help me."

"Nay, sahib! I have done my share. Now, I have other orders."

"What other orders?"

"I must go to Peshawur and report," he answered, hugging something underneath his shirt, and glancing shrewdly at the Russians.

"How about those other men you spoke of?"

"Two will stay, sahib. Two will watch. If you can discover who they are, you will be a wise man, sahib! They are up there in the hills. The others follow me."

"Won't they travel with you?"

"No, sahib. Neither will they march behind drums and trumpets. They go, as I now go, in the way that they are told, whither they are told, and without argument."

He stayed in the camp that day, and rested. But when morning came there was not a trace of him, and not a sentry or a picket or a guard could tell which way he went, or at what time, or how. He simply disappeared.

CHAPTER XIII

"EVERY WHY HATH A WHEREFORE"

IT WAS a year later when Sigurd Fitzalan Rodrick sat again in the office of the Commissioner at Peshawur. He was redder, and stronger-looking. Bagge was paler, and more worn.

"Well, youngster," said the Commissioner, pushing a box of cigars in his direction, "you didn't do so badly. We've managed to occupy a big slice of the Pathan country without a campaign. I may say that's good. I couldn't leave you up there. Now that we're making a province of it, we've got to have a man in charge with more experience, and I didn't like to put any one above your head after what you've done. So I've hunted up another job for you—a good one, too; one you'll like."

"Thank you, sir."

"You've earned it."

"I can't imagine what I did, sir, that should make you say that."

"Well, you did the right thing at the critical moment. That's always—ah—useful."

"I'd like very much to get to the bottom of it all. For instance, sir, about those Russians. What happened to them after they got down here?"

"Why, of course, they were treated very hospitably, and sent back to Russia by way of Bombay and London."

"Did you know that they were there when you sent me up?"

"No. I suspected something of the kind. Didn't know it, though."

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"Well, sir, I'm still puzzled!"

"So, I understand, is the—ah—Russian Government!"

" 'Fraid the whole thing's too deep for me, sir. Of course, I see now, as I did not see then, that you wanted to occupy that country without fighting. And I see how the secret-service men acted under orders when they got the tribe at loggerheads about the head-manship. That's obvious—just as obvious as my cue was to back up Mohammed bin Suliman afterward, and creep into the country, so to speak, behind him. But I can't see even now why you sent me up there with orders to do nothing."

"No? Did it ever occur to you that a secret-service man, on active duty such as that, would have very little opportunity for writing out reports? Suppose, for the sake of argument, that he could carry pen and ink with him. Wouldn't the act of writing be likely to draw suspicion on himself? And some of the best secret-service men can't write at all!"

"Then, my camp was a blind? I was just there as an excuse for some one who could write messages to be there too?"

"To a certain extent, yes."

"I'd give something to know which of my men was the secret-service man."

"You had two with you. Your baboo was one of them."

Rodrick stared hard at him, but the Commissioner seemed quite serious, and did not even smile.

"He's one of our very best men, that baboo."

"Then, sir, I take back every single thing I ever said about understanding the natives of this country!"

"By the time you're my age," said the Commissioner, "you'll have done that about twenty different times. When a man's been twenty-five years here, he begins to realize that he doesn't know anything yet. Then he's about fit to govern!"

Rodrick sat quiet for a minute, and let the full strength of that advice soak in. It was not the first time that he had heard it, but he was beginning to realize the truth of it for the first time.

"I've wondered once or twice, sir," he said presently, "whether I ought to have searched those Russians. They might have had valuable documents hidden on them, maps and things, and records of what they'd done—something compromising that might turn out useful in a diplomatic way."

"Certainly not," said Bagge. "Never show any discourtesy to your country's guests. The secret-service men had strict orders to bring nothing to a head until they had secured absolutely every document that the Russians might have—in case, of course, that they turned out to be Russians."

"Then did they get hold of anything compromising?"

"That," said the Commissioner, "would be a—ah—breach of confidence. I couldn't admit that! But—ah—you'll possibly have noticed that the Russian Government is not interfering in any way with the settlement at Kabul. It looks, doesn't it, as though we held some kind of trump-card in reserve?"

"I'd rather be a Commissioner of one of these northern provinces than anything I know!" exclaimed Roderick.

"You will be some day," said Bagge, "provided you go on as you're doing. You obeyed the letter of your orders until the always possible hitch came in the — ah — scheme of things. And then, you seem to have realized the spirit of them. Of course I couldn't have given you orders to attempt what the secret-service men did. That would have never done for Parliament! But I picked you because I thought you could be depended on to act properly in case of an emergency. That's why I'm sending you on this new mission. You didn't fail. Don't fail this time. Good afternoon!"

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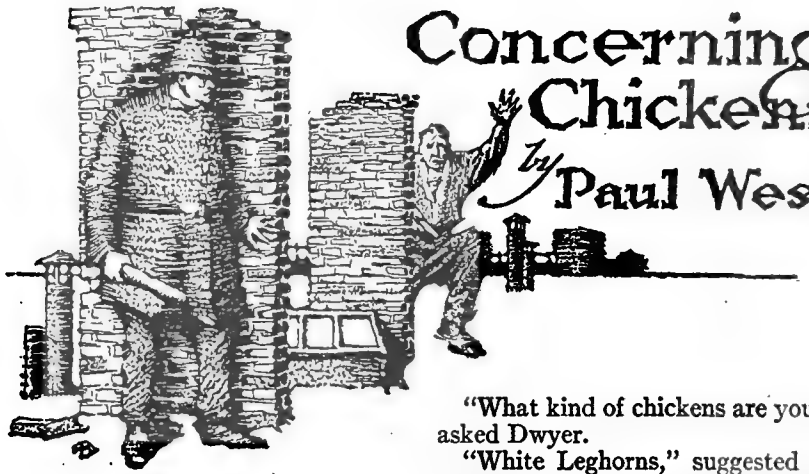

Concerning Chickens

by Paul West

"AND in the back yard," said Officer Hannigan to the group in the reserves' room at the station-house, "there'll be chickens. I says to me old woman, 'The front of the house is yours, and you kin have annything there you want—chrysanthemums or goldenrod or fergit-me-nots, and I won't bother you. But the back yard,' I says, 'is mine. Chickens,' I says, 'I've always wanted, and this is me first chance.'

"So we've got the place laid out like this."

He drew as near to the table as his generous girth would permit, and Schwartz and Dwyer also came closer, their policemen's brass buttons scraping the edge of the table familiarly as Hannigan, with a thick forefinger, proceeded to demonstrate the layout of the little place over on Long Island which, by dint of careful saving, he had succeeded in purchasing for his own.

"Here's the back yard," he said, drawing a line with his finger. "'Tis about forty feet deep and maybe thirty wide. This much of it," he slid his finger across the space, "I had to l'ave fer the old woman fer to hang her wash out in. But here's the dead-line. Beyant that I'm Captain, and she knows it. The chicken-coop I've laid out like this, along the fence, with a run beside it. Thin here is another house fer settin' hens, and beyant that another run fer the young chicks."

"A goot idea," said Schwartz. "Many's the little chick I lose by the big fellers trampin' on dem."

"What kind of chickens are you gettin'?" asked Dwyer.

"White Leghorns," suggested Schwartz. "For laying you can't beat dem fellers."

"Sure, I know," agreed Hannigan. "White Leghorns are all right fer layin', but fer eatin', nix. And onct in a while it's my idea to go out an' wring the neck of a fat young rooster. Thin what good is a White Leghorn, widout enough meat onto him to fill yer tooth!"

"Plymouth Rocks, then?" put in Dwyer.

"Yis, them's good eatin'," said Hannigan. "I was thinkin' I'd try them."

"Why not git it some by each kind?" suggested Schwartz.

"Well," said Hannigan, doubtfully, drawing back from the table and proceeding to fill his pipe, "well, I dunno. I was——"

"HANNIGAN!"

The lieutenant's voice rumbled from the office, and into the reserves' room, like distant thunder. At its sound Hannigan brought the forelegs of his tilted chair to the floor with a bang, and sprang to his feet, thrusting his filled pipe into his pocket. With a bound remarkable in its agility for one so heavy as Hannigan, he came to his feet, slapped his helmet on his head, buckled his belt with a grunt and hastened out of the room. The next moment he stood before the lieutenant's desk, in a salute.

As he came into the room he saw a woman nervously clinging to the desk behind which sat his superior officer. The lieutenant indicated her with the end of his penholder, and Hannigan, in a second glance, noticed that she was rather plainly dressed, and wore an expression of great anxiety. But then, that was nothing unusual—most people who are

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seen about a police station look troubled.

"Hannigan," said the Lieutenant, "go round with this lady to her tenement. Her husband's cuttin' up, and she wants to make him behave. Lady, this officer will go with you."

"Come on, lady," said Hannigan, starting for the door.

The lieutenant's voice made them stop.

"And Hannigan," said he, "you'd better bring him back with you. It'll maybe throw a scare into him. Bring him back."

"What's the matter, lady?" asked Hannigan, as they descended the steps of the station house. "Is he drinkin'?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Officer! He never drinks. He is one of the kindest, best men. But oh—it's terrible. He's locked himself in a room and says he'll kill anybody who dares go near him."

"I guess he's been drinkin', all right," said Hannigan. "Is he workin'?"

"Not for a week," said the woman. "All the time he's been stayin' in the spare room—the one the lodger used to have—makin' something."

"Makin' what?"

"I dunno. He won't let nobody in. Today he didn't come out fer dinner, an' I sent 'Liza—she's our girl, the oldest—to tell him. He—he hit her, an' said if anybody come there he'd kill them. Oh, it's terrible when he hits 'Liza—because he loves her."

"H'm!" said Hannigan. "An' you say he ain't drinkin'?"

"Oh, I dunno. He—he went out last night."

"That's it. Brought it in with him. What is he? A Dutchman?"

"We are German."

"That's the way with the Dutch! If he was Irish he'd be drinkin' it outside, honest, where you could see him. But the Dutch—where's the house?"

"We're here, Mister Officer. Oh, you won't—won't——"

The woman laid her hand appealingly on Hannigan's arm as they turned in at the entrance to a tenement-house in the middle of the crowded block. He guessed what she meant.

"Hurt him, lady? No, of course not. Where is he?"

Hannigan's arrival had been heralded. A throng of dirty children pressed about the doorway, and from orifices at frequent intervals as he climbed the stairs peered faces, women for the most part, who looked affrighted and occasionally offered suggestions.

"Sure, he's a bad one, Mr. Cop," said one woman, on the third floor. "He's a Dutchman."

"He been gooda man," said an Italian woman. "I guess he gona what you calla crazy, hey?"

At the top of the house, the woman who had been piloting Hannigan to her husband stopped, and pointed at a door in the rear of the dark hall.

"He's in there," she said.

A girl of ten came running from the squalid apartment, and hid her face in her mother's skirt.

"It's all right, 'Liza," said the woman comfortingly.

"Oh, he's going to hurt papa!" cried the girl.

"Don't you be afraid, little one," said Hannigan. "I'll be as gentle. I got kids o' my own. He's where, lady?"

"In the back room," she said. "There's a door leadin' into it from the hall, there. Oh, you—you won't——?"

Hannigan, drawing his club, held it in his left hand, while, with the other, he took hold of the knob of the door toward which she pointed.

"It's all right, lady," he said. "You and the kid go inside and don't bother. Mebbe, when I take him around the corner, you'd better be ready to foller. The lieutenant'll want you there. It'll t'row a harder scare into him. Go in, now."

HE WAITED until the woman and the girl had gone into their tenement by the main door. Then he took firm hold of the handle of the other door and turned it.

There was no obstacle to his entrance, nor, as Hannigan's bulk passed the threshold, did there seem to be any one or anything stirring. The room was very dark; the merest chink of light, like a diamond-point, at the opposite end, indicating that there was a window, but that the shades were closely drawn. There was no sound. Yes, there was something—like, Hannigan thought, the ticking of a clock. It was undoubtedly that.

But of the man whom he had come to bring back to the lieutenant the dim illumination of the chamber made by his opening

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the door into the gloomy hall showed no sign.

Hannigan clutched his club and stood still for a moment. Then he said:

"Come on out o' that. I see youse!"

No answer, only the ticking of the clock.

"I don't want any fooling with youse," he said sternly. "I tell ye agin, come on out o' that!"

Still no answer.

Hannigan took a firmer hold of his club, fixed his helmet snugly on his round head, hitched his belt and stepped forward into the darkness. Then there came an answer. It was a crash, a flash—the firing of a pistol, and a bullet pinged into the wall beyond his shoulder. At the same instant something launched itself from the opposite side of the dark pit, and hurled itself upon him.

All Hannigan could see was a face, the eyes glaring like fire, the teeth flashing like those of a wild beast, as the human catapult smashed against him and bore him, with a grunt, to the floor.

The breath went out of him before he could defend himself, and then his head hit the mockboard with a bang, making him see another flash. At the same instant the man who had leaped upon him scrambled to his feet and disappeared through the doorway. As Hannigan gathered his puzzled, outraged personality together he could hear the man in the hall, wildly scrambling, climbing somewhere.

Hannigan, with an oath, and still clinging to his club, got up as quickly as he could, and plunged through the doorway. The woman and the little girl were standing in the hall, looking toward the ladder which ran to the roof. More light was now entering, since the skylight was off. Hannigan, without noticing the woman and the girl, started lumberingly toward the ladder. A shriek from the woman made him pause with his foot on the bottom rung.

"Oh, oh!" she shrieked. "You've shot him! You've shot him!"

The halls were filling with the tenement's population.

"The cop shot him! He shot Charley Meyer!" came the cries.

"You're a liar!" replied Hannigan to the crowd generally. But there was a little more softness in his tone as he said to the man's wife, "'Twas him shot at me, lady. But it's all right. I'll get him!"

"Oh, please don't hurt him."

CLIMBING an almost perpendicular ladder is no small task for any one not in the pink of condition. For the heavy-bodied, heavy-footed Hannigan it was an achievement. But he encompassed it, and at last popped his rubicund countenance, puffing and perspiring, out through the open skylight. He shoved his shoulders through the hole and brought his fat hands to the surface of the pebbled roof to draw the rest of his bulk up. It was just as he had accomplished this, not without the loss of a brass button or two, and had fallen, almost collapsing, on the roof, that he heard a shout.

Before he could see whence it came the man's pistol cracked again, and a second bullet passed in close proximity to Hannigan. Then another, and he swore frightfully, for the last had pinked the visor of his helmet—the new helmet, which stood him five good dollars.

He was all on the roof now and, even before he had got to his feet, he had drawn his own pistol and was looking for the man. He was not in sight, and Hannigan was glad, for in the heat of his rage he would have shot at the fellow, and, he remembered, the lieutenant had told him not to do any harm to a citizen unless it was necessary. Besides, he had promised the man's wife——

Ping! A fourth bullet whizzed by him. Also, he saw the man, who was hiding behind a chimney. Hannigan leaped for another chimney, and had just disappeared behind it when a fifth bullet sped past his shoulder.

"Quit that, now!" he ordered the man, and by way of reply got a wild, maniacal burst of laughter.

"I'll give you one chance," said Hannigan. "Quit that firing and give yourself up, or——"

"Spy!" shouted the man, his head appearing over the rim of the chimney which sheltered him. "Who sent you? The Kaiser! The Kaiser! I know! But they shall not get me! I dare them! Come on!"

"If I thought you had no more bullets in that pistol I'd come on, all right," replied Hannigan. "You Dutch trouble-maker! If I lay me billy across that thick skull of yourn you'll think Kaiesr and all the other Dutch beer-sellers sent me! Here, now—none o' that!"

In his earnestness he had allowed part of his bulk to protrude from behind the

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chimney. It invited another bullet from that plentiful pistol, and he dodged quickly.

"I knew they were coming," said the man. "I've known it for a week. I dreamed it. But I've been ready for them. If they had sent you a little later—— Ha, ha, ha! A little later! You'll know—they'll know!"

"I know I'm sick of this monkey-doodle business!" answered Hannigan. "And I didn't come later, but now!"

"Others will come later, though," said the man. "And when they do—can you guess? Listen!"

"You listen to me——"

"Hear it—'tick! tick! tick!' Is it two o'clock?"

"Never you mind what time it is. I tell you agin——"

"At two o'clock! You heard it—the 'tick! tick! tick!' "

It came over Hannigan that the man was speaking of the clock which had first attracted his attention on entering the dark room on the hall below.

"Well?" said he, as the man paused, seeming to be listening for the sound to come through the roof. "Well? What about the clock?"

"Ah! I must go to it. I must be there in time. I must have her, and 'Liza—and—and those they send for me! We must all be there together! Let me go!"

Apparently forgetting Hannigan, and thinking that he could reach the skylight unmolested, the man suddenly ran from his hiding-place behind the chimney and made briskly for the opening in the roof. Hannigan, with a glance, saw that he had slipped his pistol into his pocket. He sprang after the man, to seize him. But the other heard and, turning swiftly, screamed in fright. Then, before the policeman could get sufficient grip upon his shoulder to overpower him, he wriggled free and leaped away to safety.

"Back! back!" he shrieked. "Back! I must go."

"YOU bet your life you must go!" said Hannigan.

He dived at the man and, as he went down, caught him about the waist, and together they fell to the roof. Then ensued a struggle fierce and momentous. They rolled about, now with Hannigan's heavy weight pressing, it would seem, the frail figure beneath him, through the pebbled sheathing. Now that frail body would scramble free; the officer would become the under man. Long, cold fingers dug at his windpipe, glaring eyes hurled their shafts into his terrified, angered optics, bulging from his purpling features. Hannigan's hands, clenched into battering-rams, pounded at the maniac's jaw, and met the bony face with a sounding impact, but with little, if any, material results.

There was little intelligible said by either, the insane man's words rattling from him inarticulately, punctuated by his shrill shrieks of laughter. Hannigan's voice was only a hoarse grunt, and all he could say was:

"Stop it! I don't want to hurt you! But stop it!"

Suddenly, as their bodies described another revolution, Hannigan's heart stopped with a bang against his side, for, reaching with his right shoulder to get a brace against the roof, he found that it came into contact with nothing. A turn of his head showed him that they were teetering on the very edge of the roof. The madman, too, saw this, and was exerting all his strength to complete the turn that would hurl them into the street four stories below. Nothing but Hannigan's concentrated strength and will prevented this.

With all the power in his physical and mental being he forced the maniac back. The man's pressure upon him yielded for an instant as he raised one hand and called upon Heaven to watch them; and Hannigan took advantage of this respite. He gave an extra heave, the man's light weight was shot from him backward toward the roof and Hannigan leaped after him.

The man was upon his feet like a cat for quickness. As the officer bore down upon him he slipped from his grasp and fled. Hannigan was after him again. It was not his second, nor his third, nor his fourth wind that was enabling him to follow every movement of his thin and wiry foe. No, it was something back of physical ability, which latter he had long since exhausted.

His lungs were no longer taking their full quota of air, his heart was no longer beating, it seemed to him. According to all tests he should have been, and would have been, "all in." But he had never been farther from that condition in his life. He forgot his fat, his lack of wind, his often painful feet. He thought of only one thing—getting

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that man, and the insistence of that thought it was that made him do things he had not been able to do since his waist had passed the forty-inch mark.

Club he had lost, but he had his hands. But he could not command the speed of the other man, who kept well ahead of him, eluding, though by no means escaping him, as they dodged about the roof. Hannigan's aim was to keep the man from the edge of the roof, fearing that, in his frenzy, he would take a sudden idea of springing off into space. If he could keep him from committing suicide, maybe, by some lucky chance, he could get his hands on him, and if he did—well, he had promised the lieutenant to bring him back to the station-house.

All the time, as they dodged about, the maniacal Meyer maintained his frightful cries, mostly meaningless, but tantalizing to Hannigan.

"They've sent you!" hissed the man. "They want to bring me back there! But they shall not do it! I'll not go!"

"You'll—go!" replied Hannigan, not so much because he had any superfluous breath and must dispose of it in speech, but simply that he wished the man to understand. "You'll go, all right, and if—you—don't stop this—and—— Aha!"

This as the maniac, catching his foot in a projection from the roof, tripped and fell. Hannigan was upon him like a ton of bricks, and again came one of those tussles in which men forget all their human instincts and battle as do the beasts, with teeth, nails, hands and feet, growling and muttering. That is to say, Meyer gave way to his primeval feelings, and Hannigan would doubtless have done so himself—for the best of men, even policemen, hate to be bitten in the shoulder.

But once more the edge of the roof—this time on the opposite side—brought the rolling battle to an end, and this time——

Hannigan felt the man roll from him, and saw him disappear over the edge.

"——!" he exclaimed as the fellow went down out of sight with a shrill cry, not of fear but of foolish satisfaction at having escaped his insistent foe. He shut his eyes, lying, panting and near spent, with scarce strength enough to have turned to watch the sight, even if his sickened heart had permitted him to do so. He listened for the crash of a falling body on the pavement below. Instead, he heard the thud of heels upon tin or sheet iron, and with it a shriek of defiance. Now he rose on his hands and knees and peered over the edge. Below, not over ten feet, was another roof, and on this the escaping maniac had alighted. All Hannigan's horror was now changed to dismayed anger. Was he to lose this fellow, after almost capturing him?

"The son of a gun!" he exclaimed. "Look at him!"

The man had risen to his feet after the half-fall, half-leap, and was off across the roof, with a sneering laugh of triumph over his shoulder at the policeman on the higher roof's edge.

"Ha! ha!" came the defiance to Hannigan's ears. "Ha! ha! They can't get me! They can't get me!"

But, after another step, he seemed to crumple up. His ankle turned under him, doubtless sprained from his jump. But he was on his feet again, limping across the tin roof, now crying like a wounded beast.

HANNIGAN peered along the roof. He had to follow the man. He could not jump, but he must get down. A wire caught his eye. It was as thick as a telegraph wire—scarcely strong enough to hold up Hannigan's 263 solid pounds, but it might help to break the fall.

He spat on his hands, grasped the wire and swung off. It gave way—not instantly, holding just long enough to make his fall a little less serious. But he came to the lower roof with a bump which knocked the wind from him, and made him wonder if he was killed.

Hearing a shriek from the man he was pursuing, he decided. He was not killed. He could not be—yet. He scrambled painfully up and rolled heavily after the fleeing man, who, sprained ankle or not, was making good time toward a skylight not fifty feet away.

"If he makes it I'll lose him!" thought Hannigan.

But all his force of will could hurry him no faster than his fat legs could carry his cumbersome body, and he reached the skylight just as Meyer was disappearing down it. With a frantic grab Hannigan caught at the man's wrist, and the grasp held.

"Let me go!" shrieked Meyer.

"Come up here, youse!" grunted Hannigan endeavoring to pull his quarry up

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through the opening, scraping its sides.

But the man, reaching up with his other hand, caught the policeman by the front of his coat. Hannigan stumbled, lost his footing and disappeared through the skylight with the other.

At the foot of the short ladder they held their grips, the maniac adding to the noise of battle his piercing shrieks, and succeeding in wriggling from every throat-hold which Hannigan tried to get upon him.

Then from a tenement rushed two men—big, bruising hulks. They asked not the right or wrong of the fray. Sufficient to them that a man was being pursued by the law, and they were ever against the law when personified by a bluecoat. With oaths they flung themselves upon Hannigan and dragged him from Meyer, who fled.

As a fist crashed against his mouth, bringing the blood and setting his brain in a whirl, Hannigan remembered his pistol. He pulled it and shot once, twice, into the ceiling. A shriek from below told him that his quarry was still within reach. The discharge of the pistol had driven the men back a few feet, but now they came forward again.

Hannigan twirled his pistol, caught it by the muzzle and brought the butt of it against the forehead of the first man. He fell like a log.

"You, too!" said Hannigan, to the second, and left him lying across the first, the blood gushing from his temple.

Hannigan always believed that he fell down the first flight of stairs. He knew that he fell down the second, but that was because he met Meyer, crouching in a dark corner, and they resumed their grip on each other. This time it was for keeps. Hannigan, his mouth pouring blood, was in no temper to be trifled with or to do any trifling himself. The shrieks of the madman were like knives in his ears, and the man's grip on his throat, broken only by the fiercest struggles, made him choke. They took the stairs head-and-heels, and came to a crashing stop at the bottom.

But they were up again, the madman leaping to his feet first, Hannigan stumbling to his like a wounded elephant. And it was not until they had gone down another flight, and staggered, in each other's clutch, out of the front door, thronged with the populace, that Hannigan knew that he was master.

Through a haze he saw another bluecoat.

"Hold this guy!" he mumbled, shoving the now weak and collapsing Meyer into his brother officer's arms. "Hold him, and bring him along wid me. Heaven send we're not too late!"

"Too late! No, ha, ha, ha! Bring them all! Let them all be there! It's ticking—ticking! Hear it! Ah, let me go to it!"

"Aisy there!" commanded the second policeman. Hannigan saw his club raised.

"Don't hurt him!" he commanded. "Bring him along as he is!"

He spat a tooth from his loosened gums, and stumbled on through the crowd to the house where Meyer lived. In his thick head the idea had come to light—the meaning of the man's words concerning the "tick! tick!" of something.

He remembered the clock he had heard in that dark room at the top of the stairs.

"Hold him here! Don't l'ave under no conditions!" was his last injunction to his brother cop, as he pushed his way into the door. He had to clutch the banisters to get his body up the stairs, and he groaned with every step. But he reached the top at last. A crowd had followed him.

"BACK! Back!" he gasped. "Fer yer lives, back!"

They scattered down the stairs, and Hannigan, reaching into his pocket for a box of matches, uttered thanks. He pushed open the door of the back room where he had first encountered Meyer, and struck a match. What he saw made him groan.

It was a conglomeration of springs and an iron pipe, connected with two dry-batteries. Connected with these batteries was an alarm-clock, the glass gone from its face, and with one of the hands—the long one—bent forward in such a way that it was within the smallest fraction of an inch of a bare wire leading to the dangerous looking thing near by.

"An infernal machine!" gasped Hannigan. "An infernal machine, and what I don't know about thim would fill a book! But I do know that hand's p'inting almost to two o'clock, and he said that was the time. What'll I do?"

This rushed through his whirling mind like a flash of lightning; also the recollection that police regulations called for the bringing of all such dangerous articles to the

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station, to be examined by the combustibles men.

"There's no time! It may go off—but——"

Hannigan shut his eyes, reached forward and, with a quick tug, tore the wires from the batteries. He held his breath and uttered a hurried, jumbled prayer, calling the saints to witness that he was coming to them in discharge of his duty. But nothing happened, and he sank back on his haunches, almost disappointed.

He heard confused noises without, and remembered his man, in charge of the other officer. He staggered out, slid down the stairs on yielding, bending legs and again found himself in the street.

"Gimme him!" he said, grabbing Meyer from the other policeman.

"Let me go there—where it is!" shrieked the maniac.

"Where's he want to be going?" demanded the second copper.

"He goes wid me!" said Hannigan. "Come on!"

They started through the jamming crowd, and a woman threw herself before Hannigan just as he thought they had the way clear.

"Charley! Charley!" she screamed, flinging her arms around the prisoner's neck.

It was his wife.

"You'd better come along, lady," said Hannigan. "The lieutenant says it'll t'row a bigger scare into him!"

The woman tried to pull her husband from Hannigan's grasp.

"You'll have to take her," said he to his brother officer.

And thus, Hannigan hauling Meyer, the other officer bringing up the rear with the struggling, pleading woman, who begged that they would not injure her husband, they entered the station.

The lieutenant looked up from writing in the blotter.

"Here's that guy, lieutenant," said Hannigan, a trifle thickly but decisively, as one may speak even to a lieutenant when one has lost a tooth and has swollen lips.

"What guy?" asked the lieutenant.

"This lady's husband," said Hannigan. "Don't you remember? You said——"

"Let him go! Let him go! He means no harm! They would kill him!" shrieked the woman.

Meyer himself was by this time silent, or only mumbling weakly to himself.

"Oh, yes," said the lieutenant. "Lock him up. Take her in that room to cool off a minute—and you, Hannigan, what happened to your lip?"

"We had a bit of a tussle, Lieutenant," said Hannigan. "I lost me new helmet, bad cess to him—and a couple o' buttons. If you don't mind——"

"GO CLEAN up!" said the lieutenant, resuming his writing.

Hannigan went into the reserves' room. It was empty, the boys being out in the back yard pitching horseshoes at a mark. He peeled off his coat painfully, and proceeded to wash his face at the sink. As he was drying his bruised features on a thick Turkish towel, Schwartz entered through the back door.

"Hello, Hannigan," he said. "Back?"

"Uh-huh!" said Hannigan, through the towel.

"Vell," said Schwartz, sinking into a chair, "if you vas going to git dem chickens to-night, I know a feller vot's got some fine White Leghorns. But you say you like dem Plymouth Rocks, so——"

"No," said Hannigan, feeling of his lower lip to see if the tooth had broken completely through, "no, I' be'n t'inkin', and I guess wid the price of eggs so high mebbe I'd better go in fer them more than fer broilers. So on our way home we'll stop and look at your White Leghorns."

"What's the matter mit your lip?" asked Schwartz, suddenly noticing the effect of Hannigan's appearance.

"A guy handed me wan when I was pullin' him," said Hannigan. "Yeah, I t'ink White Leghorns is the wan best bet!"

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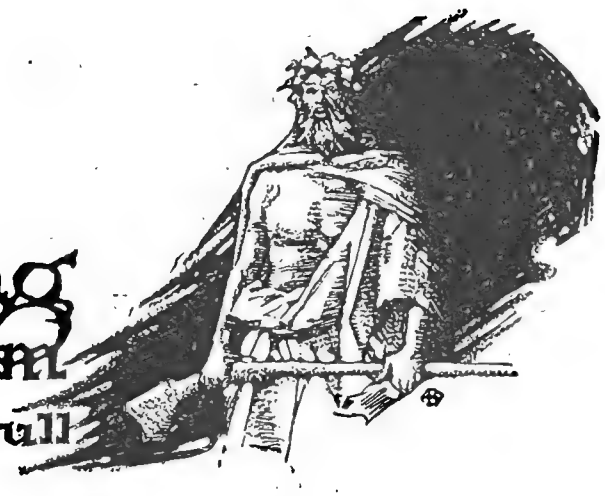
King Rehoboam

by George C. Hull



NOW this is the chronicle of King Rehoboam — not that Hebrew ruler upon whose feeble reign the Biblical historians touch briefly, but that of the son of a later Solomon. It was unfolded to me by "Two B's" McWhorter, a minister's son and educated for that vocation to which his sire had been called, which knowledge stood him in good stead when, as an officer of United States Marines, he fell foul of Rehoboam, son of King Solomon Sanders, who was also a prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains and a moonshiner of renown.

King Solomon Sanders died while resisting the intrusion of a band of revenue-officers upon his illicit still, located somewhere near the North Carolina-Tennessee line, and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead—but not in the country of his sire. He was predestined, the last being McWhorter's word, and in accordance with his early training, to rule another kingdom.

McWhorter spoke of Rehoboam just after fifty-nine of McWhorter's company of sixty-four men had qualified as marksmen or better, on the rifle-range which the marine-corps maintains at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. We were stretched at ease behind the butts, and I had been lauding the work of his company on the range.

"Yes," he said, "there was some good work this morning, but the other companies in the corps have about the same percentage, only you people never hear of them. See that black rock sticking up there like a shark's snout off Barber's Point?"

I followed his eyes and nodded.

"That," said McWhorter impressively, "marks the tomb of King Rehoboam. He never shot over a range, but he was the best shot the corps ever had, although that is not generally known. Also he was the oddest fish that ever entered the service, and that is a matter of record."

Then, as an officer and a gentleman with a little spare time on his hands, McWhorter delivered himself of this story:

I INTRODUCED King Rehoboam to the marines, and I imagine I was the only man that in any way understood him. This was probably due to the fact that I was rather thoroughly grounded in the Old Testament through the enforced studies of my youth, and therefore was in a measure able to comprehend the view-point of a man whose religion was based entirely on that ancient portion of the Scriptures, and who would have naught of the New. This because it did not fit in with the idea of retributive justice which he had formed from his study of the works of the prophets, which was the guide his grandfather and father had handed down to him.

At any rate, when Rehoboam was administering the high justice, the middle and the low, he did it according to the Ten Commandments as they are found in Exodus and backed them up with all the rest of the Mosaic laws as found in preceding and subsequent chapters, with special stress on that section which says "thou shalt give life for life," and goes on with eye for eye, tooth

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for tooth, hand for hand and foot for foot.

These were the statutes of Rehoboam, and he knew them all by heart. When he quoted them he spoke with the stern solemnity of an ancient Hebrew lawgiver of whom he might have been the reïncarnation. At other times he used the Elizabethan language and the drawl of the Tennessee mountains.

It was during the war with Spain, and I was on recruiting-duty at Knoxville, Tenn., when I first met King Rehoboam. I was sitting at my desk, biting on a bullet as it were, because I was out of action, when the door opened and a mountaineer fresh from his native wilds walked in. Now the type was not new to me, for I had gone to school in a little town at the foot of the Chilhowees, and had spent many a vacation in the mountains, but this man was primitive.

You could see it in the bunch of wild-flowers stuck in the band of his soft black hat, in his homespun trousers, home-made shoes and hickory shirt, but most of all in his face, which had in it something of majesty and of exaltation. He might have been a composite portrait of Daniel Boone and King Saul. He was six feet two inches tall, broad but slightly round-shouldered, due, I supposed, to carrying the old squirrel-rifle with a barrel six feet long which he bore in one hand with a powder-horn hanging from a shoulder. Under the other arm he carried a tattered book. His hair was long and black, and his keen gray eyes swept everything in the room, including myself, with one flicker.

"Howdy, stranger," he said as he slouched toward my desk.

"How are you?" I replied. "What can I do for you?"

He pointed to a recruiting-poster hanging in the room.

"I aims ter enlist," he said, "jest as that thar paper on yore door says. It reads that by enlisting a man gits to see the lands of stranger people. I aim to see them, more especially if there's heathen thar. I got business with them.

"This is the way of it," he continued. "Back thar in the mountings one night, my pappy, him who was killed by the Revenoos, comes ter me in a dream.

" 'Rehoboam,' he says, 'I reckon hit's time fer you ter go. Jestice has been done in these parts by me who was King Solomon Sanders and by you my first-born accordin' to the good book which yore grandpappy, King David Sanders, brought from N'Orleens, the time he went thar and whupped Packenham and the rest of the British. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been the law. The mountings has been converted to the way of Moses and the Lord, and them that ain't converted air dead. I've come ter tell you of lands far from these mountings whar they worship strange gods. Go down to the settlements and find whar these lands be, and go thar and utterly destroy the heathen as the good book says.'

"With that, pappy moves on, and when it's sunup I picks up and hits for the big settlement. I projects around some and sees that thar paper, and now I reckon I've come to the correct place."

"You have," I said. "But you might as well know now that the people we are at war with are Spaniards, but Christians. However, I understand there are quite a number of different varieties of heathen in the Philippines, where you are likely to be sent, and they may be open to conviction. Anyway, I'll advise you that we don't kill the worshipers of graven images any more. Have you read all of that book under your arm?"

"From kiver to kiver. I know the good book word for word, jest as my pappy and grandpappy knew it, and we-uns have lived up to it the best we was able."

"Let me see it," I said.

He turned it over reluctantly and I saw that it began with Genesis and ended with Malachi.

"This is the Old Testament," I explained. "The New Testament, which was written later, makes a number of changes in these laws. Haven't you read it?"

"No, and I don't keer to. There was a stranger rode into the Cove once and 'lowed there was some more writing where it said that when a man done you wrong you was bounden to do him a good turn ter pay fer it. Pappy and me couldn't make that thar notion square noways with the laws of Moses, so we told the stranger we reckoned he was wrong and a-laying for to upset the laws of the mountings. We told him to ride on, and he done so."

I didn't say anything more on the subject to Rehoboam but, as I questioned him

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to secure the necessary data for his enlistment, I found he might have been living two thousand years ago for all the changes that long period had wrought in his belief.

REHOBOAM passed muster all right, and I started him off with a bunch of recruits for Mare Island Navy-Yard. He insisted on carrying his old rifle and the laws of Moses, and I left it to the other end of the line to separate him from them.

Naturally I had doubts as to how he would get along with the other recruits, who had never heard of Moses save vaguely, but I thought a little of Rehoboam's religion would be good discipline for them, although when my mind reverted to the heathen Rehoboam would meet on his travels, I felt sorry for the idolaters.

My expectations as to Rehoboam's conduct were fully realized. I had instructed the sergeant in charge to humor him until some of the bark of his native woods was knocked off, but Rehoboam did not humor the sergeant or the other men.

He broke all of the rules and regulations in enforcing the laws of Moses on the trip across the continent. He whipped every man in the detachment for swearing, and refused to eat ham or travel on Sunday. His objection on the last-named score took the form of holding up the train-crew at the point of his old rifle and ordering them to cease from labor on the Lord's Day.

It took the combined strength of the trainmen and the other recruits to truss him up and keep him that way until they reached the Coast.

The climax was reached in San Francisco, where they were foolish enough to permit Rehoboam to visit Chinatown. He saw his first heathen burning punk-sticks in a joss-house and blocked traffic on Grant Avenue for two hours while he half killed the worshipers and threw the furniture and fixtures of the temple into the street, praying all the time to the Lord to "give his servant Rehoboam a gun, so that he might utterly destroy the idolaters and they who upheld them."

They had to call out the reserves to capture him, and it took a lot of explaining to get him away, but finally they landed him at Mare Island, where they put him through a course of sprouts which, while not altering his beliefs, made him more cautious in practising them.

It appears, however, that Rehoboam lost no opportunity of enforcing the laws of Moses when he could do so with circumspection, for I heard afterward that when the bunch of recruits with whom he traveled reached Manila, they were a set of God-fearing, clean-shooting men. They had acquired a desire to learn the latter art from Rehoboam, who shot flying-fish with his long rifle and taught them that it was a sin to send a bit of lead on any kind of an errand without getting results.

On the journey over Rehoboam asked so many questions as to the number of heathen in the Philippines, and looked so gloomy and forbidding on being informed that there were plenty of them that, when they landed, about the first thing done was to attach Rehoboam to a company stationed at Zamboanga, Mindanao, figuring that if he was going to kill heathen he might as well do it in the course of a day's work and under official sanction.

I WAS ordered to Manila six months later, and when I met Jerry Conley just in from Zamboanga, on the *Escolta*, almost the first question I asked him was concerning the conduct of the son of Solomon.

"He's gone," said Jerry.

"Not dead!" I exclaimed.

"Probably," continued Jerry. "He deserted the outfit because they wouldn't permit him to kill heathen without orders, and because they spared the life of Dato Kundo. He shot seventeen clever Moros right spang between the eyes to put the fear of God in the old Dato and induce him to come in and die like a man. When Kundo was released, we lost Rehoboam."

Then Jerry went on to give me the details. It seems after reaching Zamboanga and learning that he was in what might be called a heathen country, Rehoboam decided that there was nothing in the way of putting the old Mosaic law in practise and carrying out the ghostly instructions of his sire, King Solomon Sanders.

Learning that Dato Kundo scoffed at and defied American rule from a strong hill-fort some miles way, Rehoboam discarded the regulations and the excellent repeating-rifle with which a kindly government had

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armed him and, taking his old muzzle-loader, slipped out of camp one night and only returned when he had been given up for dead, some three days later.

Of course they clapped Rehoboam in the guard-house. When asked where he had been he had replied, "Destroying of the heathen," and kept his mouth closed thereafter. Just as the powers-that-be were conferring as to whether he should be tried by court martial or be examined as to his sanity, that haughty, unconquered and murderous chief Dato Kundo came trailing into camp with a profusion of white flags, a train of presents and a load of promises to be good.

"I come to make peace," he declaimed to Major Knollys, who was in command. "I can fight with men and conquer, but who can withstand his enemies when Azrael, the angel of death, fights for them? For three days a restless and evil spirit has hovered about my stronghold, breathing slaughter. My watchmen have toppled from their towers, dead men, and my warriors whom I sent into the forests to search for the slayer have been found dead. Seventeen of my young men have been sent to Paradise by the Avenger, who touches them with a fiery finger between the eyes, leaving there a small red mark as a sign that the Death Angel has passed.

"Last night, though my guards were doubled, he came even into my own house; to the room where I slept and touching me upon the shoulder looked on me with the visage of Shaitan, so that my heart turned to water. He bade me by signs to come here, and I obeyed. Lay thou thy commands upon me and mine, for I would be rid of this most terrible visitor."

With that, Major Knollys, who was a wise old coot, fell right in with the play and told old Kundo that he had guessed the identity of his unwelcome visitor correctly, and intimated that he had several other avenging-spirits at his beck and call who would make the ordinary *juramentado* running-amuck pale into insignificance, if ordered to do so. But, he said, the visitations would cease if Dato Kundo promised to be a good boy and do in all things as the American Government wished him to do, and Dato Kundo pledged himself with fervor and on bended knees to obey, left a pile of prizes taken from his followers as security and afterward was dismissed with honor.

Naturally, after that, there was no question of a court martial and inquisition in lunacy for Rehoboam. He was released from custody and, after being officially rebuked and told not to slay heathen without orders, he was unofficially praised by Major Knollys, for it means something when one man accomplishes a task which might have cost the lives of a good many men to have performed, otherwise.

Rehoboam accepted praise and blame without a word, but when the Major had concluded, Rehoboam looked around with a frown on his face and spoke in his best Bible-English.

"Where is the king of the heathen whom I delivered into your hands that he might be offered as an example to the people of this land who know not the Lord?"

"He promised to be good and we let him go," explained the Major.

Rehoboam, with a snort of disgust, became a mountaineer again.

"Yeh did, did yeh?" he growled. "I reckon I orter have killed him myself. 'Pears to me you all are sot in departing from the laws of Moses and in hiving up with strange gods. I 'low no good kin come of it," and he stalked off to his tent.

The next morning, Rehoboam with his Old Testament, squirrel-rifle and powder-horn were not to be found, and it was learned that a proa had disappeared from the beach during the night.

TWO busy years passed, and the case of Rehoboam had been forgotten in the stress of other things, but I was at Zamboanga when fishermen brought in a mestizo pearl-trader whom they had picked up half dead from a drifting proa far out at sea. He had a strange story to relate, and it was through him we heard of Rehoboam.

According to this pearl-trader, Luis Garcia by name, he with two white men, "Blue-Nose John" Kilpatrick, and Stephen Dufree, both of whom bore piratical reputations throughout the South Seas, had sailed from Singapore on a schooner for a cruise through the pearl-islands. They planned to take by force when possible, and trade only when it was the part of wisdom to do so. They carried an armed crew of Chinese and Malays, and with them, under the special patronage of Blue-Nose John, went Margaret Du Bois, known in Singapore, Shanghai and

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Manila, and as beautiful as she was wicked.

Caught in the tail-end of a typhoon, they had been blown far from their course and southward into a group of strange islands lying below Mindanao. They had anchored off the largest of these and prepared to go ashore when a voice had hailed them in English from the wood along the shore, forbidding them to land and asking what they wanted. When they said they were trading for pearls, the reply had been that one man would be sent aboard to barter for tobacco and cloth.

Then a savage who appeared to be a chief had come off to the schooner in a canoe. He had been taken below to the cabin, and there, because he refused to barter for but three of a precious store of pearls, he had been stabbed to death by Blue-Nose John, while Margaret Du Bois laughed through her fingers.

That night, while an orgy raged below and a poor watch was kept on deck, half a hundred savages, many of them armed with rifles and pistols, boarded the schooner. They were led by a giant white man, with a bushy black beard and hair of the same color falling to his shoulders, who did terrible execution with a long muzzle-loading rifle. The battle had been short and fierce. Stephen Dufree had been killed and the entire crew slaughtered. Garcia, with Blue-Nose John and the woman, had been taken ashore and to a great open space in the jungle where on a stone altar a fire was burning.

The white chief stood before this altar and led a thousand kneeling savages in singing what sounded like a Christian hymn.

Afterward he had read from a tattered book that a life must be paid for a life. Blue-Nose John had been led before him, and then and there sentenced to death for the murder of the ambassador.

The condemned man had lost his nerve and groveled on the ground and begged the woman to intercede for him. She had glided forward and spurned the prostrate man with her foot. Then she had turned to the white chief with witchery in her eyes and, calling him her lord and king, had urged him to slay the trader as one who was not fit to live.

"They take Blue-Nose and tie him hard to a tree," said Garcia, "and then the big white man took from under the heap of stones on which the fire burned the long gun with which he killed many of us on the schooner and, stepping two hundred paces away from Blue-Nose and with only the flickering light to guide him, shot the rifle so that the bullet entered between the two evil eyes of Blue-Nose. Then the chief, raising his hands, said in a deep voice, 'Thus saith the law!' and all those peoples kneeling shouted 'Amen.'

"But the accursed woman crept up to the white chief and laid her yellow head on his black beard which fell over his bosom, and throwing her white arms about his neck bent his head so that she kissed him between the eyes where the bullet hit Blue-Nose. Then a groan came from the people, but he took from his head a wreath of ihlang-ihlang flowers and crowned her with it, saying, 'Thou art Jezebel—but my queen,' and arm in arm they walked away into the darkness.

"As for me, the next morning I was taken on board the schooner which sailed northward until far out of sight of land, when they lowered a boat with but little food and water and bade me get in it and row away.

"I ask the Government that it may regain my pearls, and the schooner, which should be an easy thing, for, held in bondage by that woman of a thousand devils, his rule will not endure."

So I knew that the son of King Solomon Sanders had come into his own — for a time.

"BE assured that we care nothing for your schooner or your pearls," said the Commandant when Garcia had ended his story, "but this thing of a Kingdom of Israel in the South Pacific needs investigation."

Within three hours the little gunboat *El Gato*, with a company of marines on board under my command, was steaming south to search for the Kingdom of Israel and put it under the American flag where it belonged.

We might never have found it, for the pearl-trader had but little idea as to its location, but one night, as we were feeling our way through a perfect nest of islets, I heard what sounded like an old familiar tune. We stopped the engines and listened, while a deep voice sang:

"It's the good old religion,
The good old religion,
It's the old-time religion,
And it's good enough for me."

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Then a thundering big chorus joined in and sang the old revival-hymn as I have heard it a hundred times at camp-meetings in the South. But the spell which had been cast over us by the music of that chant was rudely broken when a woman's voice shrilled out in a foul snatch of a popular water-front ballad, ending in a burst of wild and ribald laughter.

"There's Rehoboam and his kingdom," I said solemnly, pointing at the palm-fringed island from which the sounds came.

We lowered away three boat-loads of marines and I sat in the bow of the first. I had a plan whereby I hoped to take Rehoboam prisoner without slaughtering the children of Israel.

When we were within half a dozen boat-lengths of the beach, we halted and, while the men rested on their oars, I stood up and shouted, "Hail, King Rehoboam!" and repeated it three times.

Lights began to twinkle far back in the bush at the second hail, and I knew Israel was getting under arms. At the last hail one light moved steadily toward the beach and in a moment a man bearing a kukui-nut torch in his left hand strode down to the water's edge and stood there silent with the little waves curling up to his feet.

It was Rehoboam. He wore a beard as the pearl trader had said, and his long black hair curled down over the golden feathered cloak which covered his shoulders and fell to his knees. His right hand held the old squirrel-rifle as a staff. A garland of white flowers crowned his head and he looked like an ancient king—every inch of him.

"Hail, King Rehoboam!" I called for the fourth time. The kukui-torch fell hissing into the water as the hand that held it dropped wearily.

"Who calls on Rehoboam, the accursed?" wailed the man on the beach.

"Your friend from Tennessee," I replied, but the words aroused no memory for him.

"Nay, but it is Shishak and the Egyptians come to destroy Israel for the sins of Rehoboam," came the cry of lament, and a beam of the waning tropic moon struggled through the palms and fell on the man's form and gilded the spear-heads in the gloom behind him. Then he turned from us and addressed the wooded heart of the island in a foreign liquid tongue in which we could distinguish the notes of a sad farewell.

As he concluded, there came from the green leafy depths a long-drawn cry of sorrow as of a people mourning with one voice. As it died away, there was deep silence for an instant, and then a great unseen choir chanted a solemn "Amen," which seemed to roll out over those seas until it was lost at the distant horizon-line.

Indistinct in the trees along the white strip of beach crept a shadowy figure which seemed to be that of a woman, for we heard a sound of weeping. King Rehoboam moved into the dusk to meet it and we heard a voice raised in pleading, and murmured, defiant replies. Once again something glittered in the gloom and in the deathly stillness something sounded like a long-drawn sigh. Then Rehoboam returned to the water's edge.

"I have slain the Jezebel who burned the sacred book and who would turn my people after strange gods," he shouted, "but my kingdom has passed from me for her sins! I have killed her that my people might not be led astray, and now I must pay as the law saith—a life for a life!"

As the boat-keel grated on the beach, I leaped out and, looking into the eyes of Rehoboam, saw that he was quite mad. Behind him, where the first blush of dawn was driving back the night, his Jezebel lay dead, her white arms outstretched toward the sea, the red hibiscus blooming in her yellow hair.

WE buried the woman and took Rehoboam back to Zamboanga, leaving the exploration of the islands to a future day. While awaiting the transport which would convey Rehoboam to the States and an asylum for the insane, we attempted to get the story of his kingdom from him, but without much success. His mind was ever on the woman and the destruction she had wrought, and he kept insisting wildy that he should be executed for having killed her. Of the other deaths charged to him he took no thought, for then he had taken life only in enforcing the laws of his forefathers, but his stern ideas of justice offered him no indulgence for the killing of the woman whom he had taken into his arms.

From his ramblings during semi-lucid intervals, we gathered that, after reaching those islands to the south, in some mysterious way he had stalked into a gathering

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of natives engaged in idolatrous rites, after first picking off the priests from the woods. He had destroyed the idols and had apparently been accepted by them as a god, although he didn't seem to know this. He had lost no time in putting the Mosaic law in force, and had won the savages to his rule, at first through fear, and afterward through the justice of his decrees. He had banded his converts together, taught them such tactics as he had learned during his brief service with the marines and then led them to war on other heathen. He had conquered twelve islands and brought them under the laws of Moses, so establishing the kingdom of Israel.

All was well until the coming of the traders with the woman. He had never had any knowledge of the sex in the outside world, and she easily snared him with the arts and wiles which formed her stock in trade. She had scoffed at the laws of Moses and, in a rage one night, had torn the book from his hands and tossed it into the fire on the altar.

Then, while the people waited with bated breaths for him to strike her dead, she had clung to him and kissed him, and he had forgiven her. In that hour the people learned his weakness, and on the other islands they had begun to return to the worship of the old gods.

"I aimed ter go over and lead them back," he moaned one day, "but the woman would not hear to it, and that night my old pappy, King Solomon Sanders, come to me again in a dream and says, 'Rehoboam, you ain't fitten to execute the laws of the good book. You air like that no-'count Rehoboam I named you fur, led astray by a woman of which the Proverbs says that her feet tromps down to death an' her steps take a hold on hell. Kill the woman that the good may not be undone, and then go and pay the penalty—a life for a life,' and I aims to do so, but when, oh when, is it going to be?"

When we turned Rehoboam over to be taken away, I told the officer in charge that the prisoner had a suicidal mania, and he promised to see that a strict guard was kept over him.

It appears, though, that just as they were off yonder point on their way into Honolulu Harbor, the swab of a sentry who had him on the deck taking the air got tired of answering Rehoboam's questions as to when he would be executed, in a diplomatic manner, and told him pointblank that he was on his way to an insane-asylum.

"You're a plain nut. Why should they hang you?" the sentry jeered.

"A life for a life," shouted Rehoboam and went overboard with the handcuffs on.

It was right off that rock that he jumped, and they never found him.

The Stone Man

by Wilbur Daniel Steele

THE face of the clock in Schlinsky's "back room" showed premonitions of arriving at 10 P.M., and several bluejackets from the revenue-cutter *Sioux* were experimenting with their powers of balance. Only one of their number had not moved—a perfect giant in stature and endowed with the features of a breaker of stone.

"Run on back to yer ship, childern," he rumbled, with a smirk intended to be maternal. "Gittin' bedtime."

Having delivered himself of these words he lay back in his chair and basked ecstatically in the shower of baleful regard cast upon him by his departing brothers from the cutter.

"Ain't going out to-night?" suggested a longshoreman from the fruit-wharf. "Time up—or did they can you?"

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"Not on yer sweet life. They don't can a man like Oscar Lindstrom. Too val'able. No, I'm on leave. I'm settin' up with my poor invalid wife to-night—an' I don't have t' go back till I won'erful well feel like it."

The sailor's brow was tortured by a quizzical crease, amazingly like a section of pavement marred by a falling safe.

"SAY, mates," he mused, "I was never took more aback in my life 'n I was when that gag went through this afternoon. I was shinin' the brass on the boat-deck when out come a woman on the three o'clock boat an' pranced right aft to the cabin like she owned the place.

" 'That's the Ol' Man's wife,' says one o' the boys.

" 'It is?' says I. 'Well, right here's where I make one last stab fer a vacation.'

" An' with that I went below an' worked a little graft I got with th' bosun an' back I come under force-draf' fer the cabin. I stepped inside the door an' saluted the Cap'n.

" 'Well?' says he, kind o' riled, 'What is it?'

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' says I, strugglin' with a hard dry sob, 'beg pardon, sir, but could I be able to have a trifle leave, sir, bein's my wife—that is, bein's the doctors tell me my poor motherless wife ain't got a chanct t' live more'n a couple days at the outside. I want,' says I, 't' be with her at the last.'

" 'Lindstrom,' says he, 'you oughta write a book.'

" 'If I could only see her fer a little, little time,' says I, near breakin' down. But I knowed right there the hand was called. He had that git-back-an'-swab-th'-deck-Slave look in his eye.

" 'Holiday,' says I to myself, 'kiss papa good-by,' an' I was startin' to back out, when the woman got her mug in.

" 'Henra,' says she to the Cap'n, 'jes' think o' that poor woman, an' little ones probable.'

" 'Sure,' says I, playin' up to her, 'seven.' An' that was the first real look I'd took at the woman.

"Say, maties, y' know I was a'most keeled over—that wasn't the first time I'd put an eye on that there lady—not by a —— of a ways! She seen I was wise, by the look on my face, an' she clapped her hand over the ol' man's eyes an' give me a wild wink an' shook her hair an' begun pourin' a stream o' whisper into his ear. When he come out of it final, he wasn't the same man.

" 'Lindstrom,' says he, 'in the first place, yer wife has died five times already to my knowledge, and in the second place, y' never had a wife, but,' says he, 'to be on the safe side, I s'pose I'll have t' let you go this once.'

"Then he grinned kind o' sick, an' his wife patted his forred an' told him what a humane feller he was, an' I pulled out an' beat it while th' beatin' was still good. An' I don't have to go back again till she passes away—my wife, that is. Glory be . . . ."

A distressing pause.

"And the woman—the Captain's wife?" suggested one of the little company, a cub reporter heavily disguised as a grocery-clerk.

"That's a rare yarn," mused the sailor, passing a tremendous fist over his dry lips. "I wouldn't ast nothin' better'n to tell that tale to you gents if the doctor that's tendin' my wife hadn't warned me p'ticular again talkin' much with my throat the way it is . . . . . Thanky, mate — don't mind if I do . . . ."

And here is the tale:

Y' REMEMBER th' manoovers they was havin' around here about a month back—defendin' Boston, I b'lieve they called it—had all th' little m'lishy boys runnin' their heads off fer about a week? Well, that was the time. Seems they wasn't enough m'lishy t' defend Boston, so they called out some o' th' reg'lars an' us too. An' of all th' rotten, foolish——

Well, never mind. We was down on the South Shore one afternoon late, an' they was a town called Bayview an' we had t' get through that town because the enemy somebody'd made up in their head was comin' along a road about five mile the other side of it. But first they was a river t' crost.

"We got t' ford, men," says the "third," who was in command. "Better strip an' carry yer clo'es on yer heads," says he.

"Say," says I t' th' bosun, who was taggin' long at my end o' the second file, "say, Emil, will you please trot up an' tap th' li'tenant on the neck an' tell him they's a bridge about a hunderd yards on his port bow. Y'd think he'd lost his eyes."

"Bridge?" says th' bosun. "What bridge?"

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"Looky here," says I, a trifle peeved, "you got no call t' ack funny jest becuz yer a non-com. If that ain't the slickest kind of a bridge y' got yer two lamps on this minute, I'll eat my shirt," says I.

"Oh. That one?" he comes back. "Why, y' know, we can't use that one—that one was blowed up by th' enemy a week past. Says so in orders."

"Oh, *mercy*," says I, an' give up.

Lord! but that water was cold! I stripped down's far 's my trunks an' clumb into th' drink with the rest, but I had a feelin' sumpin' was goin' t' happen t' somebody. I was right, an' it was me. We was right square in the middle o' th' deepest part o' that river, an' the water was ticklin' the bottom o' my chin, when I put a foot on top of a sea elephant er dead calf er sumpin'—any way it went out from nunder me queer an' sickish—an' I lit with my head in th' mud.

"By-by, little shirt," was the first words I hear when I come t' th' top again. An' there was my clo'es an' accooterm'nts sinkin' with all hands er-sailin' out t' sea, an' all them ungrateful shipmates o' mine givin' me the horse-laugh. Think o' that. Why, they wasn't a one of 'em hardly I hadn't laid my hand on one time er another—allus fer their best good.

Now if the li'tenant 'd only of seen me, it'd been all right, but he was s' far on ahead that he didn't know what was doin', an' the boys would've cut their own throats afore they'd of told him. Well, I didn't have much luck cetchin' them garments. I aimed at a pair o' pants, an' the best I did was a sock, an' by that time the crew was around a bend, dressin', an' I was wild. I come around the bend jest in time to see the rear rank disappearin' up the main street o' the town, with a reg'lar mob o' swell dames in wealthy clo'es hangin' on the flank an' cheerin' the dear brave boys.

"I'll *dear-brave-boys* 'em when I get back t' th' ship!" says I, settin' down in the edge o' th' river to wait fer night. An' then a couple o' soul-mates wanders out onto the bridge near me, an' I had to move into deeper water. I never see a sun take so long to set.

"WELL," says I to myself, tryin' t' keep my mind off the cold o' th' water, "Oscar, m' boy, yer a fine figger of a man, but yer out o' yer proper spear. Y' ought t' be in a dime-museum."

"Yes," says I back, "but yer gettin' off th' subjeck. What I want t' know is, what 'm I goin' t' do after it comes dark."

"Nothin' simpler," says I. "You're goin' t' get pinched surer'n God made little fishes."

"Fine," says I. "They ain't no place in th' world sweeter t' me right now'n the inside of a jail. Forred march t' th' nearest cop," says I.

In the end it come on dark an' I crawled out o' the river with both my knees wrapped around each other in the pit o' my stomick an' my han's flappin' in the breeze like a couple o' fly-killers. None o' you gents knows anythin' about what I felt like—you may of been through everything else, but not that. They's nothin' like it. Set a full-grown man down in a town an' take his shirt an' pants off 'im an' a four-year-old kid can scare him blue with a second-hand toothpick. Why, honest, when I started up that there street I wouldn't of took an oath on my own name.

"Remember," says I, "a cop is what yer lookin' fer."

But they didn't seem t' be any cops—only ladies an' their friends goin' out t' parties an' the like. I made a big tree in the middle o' the first block jest in time t' sidetrack fer a bunch o' middle-aged females on their way t' prayer-meetin'. After that, seemed like that tree had been wished onto me. Ever' time I tried to break away from it, long come another delegation, an' besides they was a cat that licked my shin whenever it come time t' hold m' breath.

"Jest you wait, Mr. Cat," says I through my teeth. "I'm goin' t' send sumpin' worse'n a cold chill up *yor* spine in about two seconds by the watch I lost."

Then he c'menced scrapin' the other shin. They was a more'n usual clear space jest at that moment.

Mates, I never kicked anything in my life's hard 's I kicked that cat. He raised right up into the air an' flew, singin' all the way, an' I hear him hit sumpin' hollow.

"*There!*" says I. "Smoke that in yer pipe, an' I don't care if it did hurt my foot," an' at that last word that hollow spot opened with a big bust o' light.

It was somebody's front door.

"Poor kitty," says a sweet young voice. "What's matter with poor little lamb!"

"Excuse me, lady," says I, fergettin' fer a second. . . . WOW! Say, I must of been a

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picture! The door banged to on the worst yell I ever hear from a human female's throat.

They must of been people walkin' in the middle o' the road, because I'm dead certain I passed through three separate parties before I hit the opposite fence. I don't know yet whether I went through the fence or the fence went through me—all I knowed was that it was the cop on some other beat I was lookin' fer.

You can't tell me nothin' any more about how a city is built. I'm the party that knows. Ash-pits—swill-pails—back fences—famil'ar with every kind—clo'es-lines—clo'es-lines is bad. Dogs would be worse if they c'd run faster—couldn't touch Oscar that night. Ever time I crossed an alley I killed a cat, an' ever time I crossed a street I fainted a lady.

BIMEBY I see a policeman standin' under an arc-light.

"Glory be," says I, an' stopped t' get my breath a trifle.

Then I wandered up t' him, feelin' wiggly all over, but not puttin' on like anythin's the matter.

"Orf'cer," says I, coughin' a little, "c'd you le'me have a light?"

He turned round kind o' slow, but when his eye lit on me I thought it was comin' right out o' his head.

"Hy!" says he, "go on back t' bed. What d' you mean——"

"Now, about that light," says I.

"Looky here!" he bellers, "d'you know yer breakin' the law, my man? Now run along er I'll have t' put you under arrest."

"Help yerself," says I, catchin' a glim o' somebody comin' not far off.

I see the cop scratchin' his head.

"I'll ring in fer the wagon," says he, a trifle weak.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new," I give 'im a song, edgin' a little to'rd the light. The folks comin' was gettin' pretty close by now.

"Come with me," he blatted an' towed me off down a side-street with his hand round my thumb.

I guess I must of toddled along pretty rapid, becus I was aching all over fer four walls. Anyway, when we'd come about four blocks, the little man stopped short an' set down on a horse-block t' get his wind. He was blowin' like a porpoise.

"W—won't you be—reasonab—able?" says he. "Go on hoooome now—an' go to—to bed—er *honest* somebody'll arrest you!"

I thought he was goin' t' snivel on my shoulder.

"*Arrest* me!" I hollered at him. "Say, little feller, if you ain't arrested me already you arrest me right here, an' be quick about it, *see?*"

"Can't," says he; "we're off my beat now."

"To —— with you!" says I, disgust clear through. "Where's this cop at?"

He gives me a d'rection er two an' faded like a shadder.

I wasn't near careful enough with this next cop. He seen me comin'. One o' th' shyest o' th' speeches, that cop—trailed him three times around his beat an' laid fer him in cross-streets an' ever' thing. Couldn't get nowhere near him. An' mebby I wasn't near losin' my temper by this time! I didn't give one light-blue cuss who seen me now. I peraded th' middle o' th' street an' let 'em squawk 's much's they wanted to.

"Here's where some orf'cer o' th' law's goin' t' sell his life dear," says I.

I caught one nappin'.

"Now," says I, gettin' a good holt on his neck, "are you goin' to pull me in er ain't you?"

"Oh, goodness!" says he, tryin' t' fall in a heap. "This is a p'culiar sichwashion. And the station-house so upset—y'know we ain't had anybody there fer years."

"ARE you?" says I again.

"Oh, say," says he, "some other night. Go on home now, please."

"All right," says I.

Bing. Then I started in an' give him a mayssage that went right down into the pores. He was a sight.

"Now," says I, "I've assaulted you."

"Well, ain't y' satisfied?" says he, doin' his best t' set up.

"If this ain't a —— of a town," says I, an' started fer th' country.

I passed a couple more policemen on the way, but I didn't bother with 'em. I had my mind made up fer a haystack if I c'd come acrost one handy. I must of made a perty picture drillin' along them roads in th' moonlight, puffin' an' blowin' an' cussin' an' mad's any herrin'.

But they didn't seem t' be no haystacks settin' round. I guess I'd gone 'bout a mile

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when I come alongside of a whoppin' big house set on a hill an' a fine barn astern of it. All the windies in the house was lit up.

"Sociable goin' on in there," says I t' myself, "an' all the dogs'll be eatin' nunder th' stove in th' kitchen. Me fer that barn."

I'd ought of been a burglar. They was a man settin' at the bottom o' th' ladder, an' he never knowed I passed him. An' he had a lantern too. I shinnied into th' loft an' give a sigh an' settled down into th' hay—an' then I settled up again an' give sumpin' a long sight stronger'n a sigh. That was the las' straw, so to speak.

"SAY, mate," says I, pokin' my head down the hatch, "what the—say what the—— SAY, this here hay is *baled.*"

I per*sume* the man may of been startled. Anyhow he was out o' the barn in one step. Bimeby he come back with a couple o' others an' I shinned down and interduced myself. They was a fine body o' men.

"Should we call the police?" says one of 'em.

"Run get th' dog," says another.

"No," says the third one, "I got an idea."

He didn't look it, but it turned out afterw'rds he was the butler.

"Would y' like t' earn ten dollars?" he puts to me.

"I'd like t' earn a pair o' pants," says I, clappin' my knees t'gether three times.

"Well, come along in the house," says he, "an' you men kind o' walk around him. We got t' go through the kitchen."

Mates, that was a house. The floors was slick's ice, with little pieces o' carpet throwed about over 'em that y' had t' wade through. Honest—*wade!* Well, we come into a little room with green gunny-sackin' on the walls an' th' butler told me t' wait there while he went out.

About three minutes he come back leadin' a couple o' I don't know what. They had on claw-hammer coats an' white shirts an' a pair o' specs atween 'em. Of all th' fair-haired boys I ever see, them took th' metal.

"Gen'lemen," says the butler, "here's a party I thought w'd do better'n me fer that stachuary."

He had kind of a sneakin' look.

"Treemenjus," says one of 'em.

"Oh, my *eye*," says the other.

"Somebody hit it?" says I, t' show 'em they didn't have nothin' on me.

I guess I must of missed fire though.

"We're givin' some amachure th'atricals," squeaks the first one.

"If they're anything t' wear, gimme one quick," says I.

"Hand me that mantil, James," says the same one.

He took a couple ounces o' white cloth an' run it over my shoulder an' around my middle an' stood off squintin' through his glass eye.

"Stunnin'," says the other. "Where's the liar?"

"Eeny, meeny, miny mo," says I, but I missed again.

Butler hands me a sort of overgrowed wish-bone with three strings to it.

"There!" sings the first gent. "When we get him whitened up he'll be c'lossal."

"Yes, but them pants," says I.

"You'll get them pants *afterwards*," says the butler into my ear. "Do what they tell y' to now *or* I'll call in the police."

"I give up," says I. "No hope there."

Then they laid some sort o' whitewash all over the showin' parts o' me, even t' th' eyelids, an' led me out behind a reg'lar theayter-stage they'd rigged up in the dance-hall.

"There," says one o' the lads, p'intin' to a figger in marble standin' atween a couple pa'm-trees, "there's where you're to stand, 's much like that's possibil, durin' th' secon' ack. We'll have that *re*moved," says he.

"Is they goin' t' be folks out there?" I ast, p'intin' to'rds the dance-hall.

"Yes, my man," says he, "but don't you mind. They'll all take you fer a piece o' stachuary up till th' very last minute when you take the la'rel-wreath off yer own head an' place it *up*on the head of th' poet."

"*How?*" says I. "Come again, please."

"You'll know the poet from his won'erful black hair, long an' silky—ain't Daubray's the loveliest hair, Oswald?"

"Puffeckly in'scribable," says the other.

"He wrote the little play we're givin'—a dramy in verse. When he comes out at the last—the very last, remember—t' bow t' the gatherin', take this wreath off an' set it on his forred, gentle, but with a flour'sh. Do it from behind. It's t' be a s'prise t' him. An' don't let him see you 'n th' meantime. Here, set in there behind them drops."

"Hey, Butlerman," says I, after the invalids 'd left, "they don't happen t' be no cats round here, does they?"

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"Why?" says he.

"Oh, nothin'," says I, "an' y' needn't look s' peeved over it neither. Guess I let you outa sumpin' y' wasn't pinnin' fer! Now run get me a plate o' chow. I'm s' holler I whistle."

"After*wurds*," says he, still evil. "They're beginnin' t' come in f'm dinner now."

SURE enough, I give a squint through a hole in th' drop an' there come a number o' parties totterin' into th' dance-hall. The men was dressed up fer waiters, same's the two fair-haired lads, but the ladies—— Say, mates, I begin t' see right there why it was th' cops couldn't work up much excitement over me, when th' mothers o' th' c'munity run around with their canvas reefed that way.

"Oscar, m' boy," says I, "yer right in th' swim."

An' things *was* beginnin' t' swim too. They was a prime raft o' idjits togged out t' beat th' crazy-house runnin' round behind th' curtain, lookin' worried an' sayin' stuff over t'emselves, an' there in th' middle of 'em I got a bearin' on th' guy with th' hair. Mates, mates, I wisht y' could of seen him. He was a furriner which y' couldn't miss at a thousand yards. His face an' hands was pale green an' he could of set on his hair if it'd been braided.

"Seven busted noses in th' Sutherland fam'ly," says I. "Hy, son," says I, grabbin' a lad in yeller tights that'd lost his way, "when does this here show c'mence."

"Oh!" says he, "oh, I say! D'y' know y' gi'me quite a start. Ain't that *too* absurd?"

"Too absurd fer *wurds*," says I.

"An' so you're Apoller—— Oh, oh, my eye, look out, HE's comin'!"

"Who?" says I, an' just then I got a glim o' Bay Rum steamin' around th' point. They wasn't no time t' make a lee nowheres.

"Stachuary," says I to myself, "stach fer all yer worth, an' I hove myself into th' nearest I c'd rec'lect of the stone figger. I guess it was a perty bum imitation, but Hair let it by. He seemed t' be okipied with sumpin' on his mind. He tromped up an' down, chawin' his thumbs an' shakin' his mane an' tormentin' his necktie.

"Oscar," says I, "he's makin' up po'try, sure as shootin'. Take a long look. It's li'ble y'll never see the like again."

Missed, once more. He was waitin' fer a lady. Perty quick she run alongside from the other quarter, an' she was a fine looker, no mistakin', but c'nsiderable flustered an' fidgity. She was togged out fer a herowine.

"D'vinity," says Hair, snappin' at the back of her wrist.

"Ah," says she, turnin' all the patriotic colors, "if I only, only knowed if you reely meant it. Th' heart of a woman's a timud thing, Clarawnce."

"Clarawnce," says I to myself, "if y' don't move along perty —— quick I'm goin' t' bust a lung."

Stachuatin' ain't what it's drawed up t' be. But Hair didn't mind. He was pattin' hisself on th' wish-bone.

"Lily of th' Youfreighties," he chirps, "if th' heart of a woman is timud, what is th' heart of a Gaskin? Ah, Gaskiny. . . ."

An' he wep' a couple tears on her wrist.

"Ah, beautiful hair," says she, fingerin' th' thatch.

"Oscar," says I, "put on yer rubbers."

"Hist!" says he, bendin' up. "One comes. Here—in this place—after the first ack. Till then farewell," says he, an' beat it.

"Ah me," she gulps, "I wisht I was never born," an' beat it likewise.

"Oscar," says I, haulin' a foot out o' the mud painful, "a stachue ain't comf'rtable, but he learns things every day. Here—in this place—after the first ack. *Co*-reck."

Honest, gents, that was a bum show. I c'n go right up t' Austin an' Stone's fer a dime an' see a better skit any day 'n the week 'n that was. But then, I wasn't payin' nothin', so I grabbed a little nap till th' folks clapped fer the finish.

"Back t' th' art-gallery, Oscar," says I, an' I wasn't any too soon at that. Bay Rum was Johnnie-on-the-spot.

"Now," says he, walkin' back an' forred nervous, "now is the time t' throw the big gaff. Holy Mother," says he, takin' a bearin' on me, "how many o' those figgers they got in this house, anyhow?"

"Good night, Oscar," says I t' myself, but right there at th' proper second th' herowine hove in sight. I never see a woman lookin' so flustrated in my life.

"Oh, I wisht I knowed what t' do," says she, wringin' her hands t'gether.

"Opul-eyed," he come back, "read yer heart."

"Seems if I wasn't in my right mind," she moans.

"Was y' in yer right mind when y' married that unspeak'ble——"

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"Don't call him that," says she. "Please don't. It's only that———"

"— That he ain't got a poetic nachure. Mildred, queen, you was made t' bloom in th' delicit atm'sphere of—er——" says he, "of mellojus r'thm."

"Score *one*," says I t' myself, takin' a chanct with a breath.

"Ah," she goes on, "but Clarawnce, you'd never, never leave me. . . ."

"Do th' stars leave th' night?" he barks, grabbin' at her wrist.

"Hold tight, Oscar," says I. "He's goin' t' ast fer th' papers." But he didn't.

"Ah, come," he moans, "come, fly with me to that dear Gaskiny. I'm a poet, but I'm likewise a nobil. You will be a ninsp'-ration t' me. T'gether we'll climb th' heights o' fame. I will tear th' la'rel f'm yond'r Apoller an' place it on th' brow of my empruss, O lotis-lipped."

"Y' got that a trifle twisted," says I t' myself. "Read yer program, m' lad."

"Oh, if I *knowed*," she groaned.

"*Know*," says he with a jester.

Then he dipped over her hand again.

"They' a twelve o'clock train t'-night," says he. "You will come with me."

"Ah, wondrus hair," says she, runnin' her fingers through it. "You've twined yerself into my very heart. Clarawnce," says she, "I have cast th' die." . . . .

"Ring th' bell," says I to meself, "one comes—er mebby two."

They was two, an' they looked s'prised.

"Rehearsin'," says the poet an' made off. It was the fair-haired boys huntin' fer me.

"Well," says I, unlimberin', "it's none o' my bus'nis."

"What?" says they.

"Nothin'," says I. "Lead on."

MATES, take it f'm me, stachuary's no okipation fer a gen'leman. In special when they're reelin' off fath'ms an' fath'ms o' goo all around you, an' they's a pa'm-tree ticklin' the back o' yer left ear, an' yer fair achin' t' kick th' lamplights out of a delicit nachure.

How they did dreel on! The hero was th' small guy in yeller tights that I'd give a start to. He carried some kind o' furren mand'lin hitched over his shoulder, an' he knock-kneed all around th' stage sayin' he was th' king o' th' trooby doors, er th' like—all in rime, mind y'. Nobody d'sputed him.

But th' big noise was the lady—the herowine. Seemed like she couldn't say 's much's a word without the folks out 'n th' dance-hall clappin' their hands an' sayin' how treemenjous. Sometimes she took turns talkin' with th' small guy an' sometimes they run it along t'gether.

But she wasn't payin' no attention t' him. Her eye never come off o' Mr. Hair, who was standin' in th' wings, pale an' interestin'. She looked bout's happy's a poached egg.

"I don't bear y' any ill will, Mr. Poet," says I, "but I'm bein' paid t' lay a hand on you, an'," says I, "I'm goin' t' earn that money."

Mates, did any of y' ever try standin' still in one p'sition fer twenty minutes at a stretch? Say, at th' end o' half that time I must of looked like a Dutch win'mill. Puttin' all my mind to it, I couldn't keep that there liar quiet t' save my soul. I wouldn't wonder if some o' th' aujience got onto me. I see one middlin' lookin' lady in the front row p'intin' in my general d'rection.

"P'int away," says I, "p'int away fer all yer worth, only save a little, becus in about two jiffies I'm goin' t' do th' Highlan' Fling an' I don't care who sees me."

Well, I never drawed 's big a breath in my life 's I did when that skit come t' an end in a blaze o' po'try. The herowine scuttled out, an' when she passed Topknot I see him give her a look that would of made an oyster sick. Ever'body was clappin' louder'n ever an' callin' fer th' auther.

"Now," says I t' myself, "NOW!" says I. "Auther, step up t' th' slaughterin'. Make up yer last piece o' po'try, an' say a little prayer. . . . Here's where y' get a gift f'm th' stone man."

He ambled out f'm behind that wing like a plate o' warm mush. He come right past me, just in range o' my right toe.

"No, Oscar," says I, "keep yer mantil on—your time's comin'."

When he got t' the front o' th' stage, he bowed over s' far I c'd see a patch in his pants. Ever'body was callin' fer a speech.

"Oscar," says I, "you know they told y' t' wait fer th' *last* time."

"Yes," says I in answer, "an' I have an idee this here'll be th' last time."

I undone one knee an' it positive creaked. I come up behind him s' quiet I c'd hear th' gasps bein' passed around among th' aujience. I h'isted the wreath f'm off my head.

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"Oscar," says I, "it's none o' *yor* bus'nis, but—BING."

Say, I laid that thing on his head so's I thought it'd never come off. He crumpled up like a piece o' paper, an' creaked.

"All t'gether," says I, gettin' my fingers into th' wondrus wool, "all t'gether—*heave!*"

Mates, I set down back'ards s' hard it knocked me wuzzy. The first thing I seen distinct after that was my own right fist full o' human hair-goods, with a la'rel-wreath settin' atop o' them.

"Y' ain't had a drop fer some time, my child," says I.

An' then I took a look at th' nobil poet.

"Change cars fer South Boston!" says I.

Gents, what hair he had left was s' red it hurt. Poor cuss—folks was comin' up over th' footlights.

They was quite a ruction.

Well, I scrambled out o' there an' went aboard o' th' butler. I was rigged out in the best th' house held afore I got through with him. An', d' y' know, that herowine-lady made a stab at me in the hallway when I was tryin' t' leave, an' wep' on my neck—honest.

"Oh," says she, "how can I ever thank you?"

"I dunno," says I. "I can't think."

"Some day," she says, "Heaven will send me a chanct."

"More'n likely," says I, breakin' away. "I ain't much on th' weepin' deck. . . . ."

When I see her in that there cabin this afternoon, I give two grunts an' a whistle. S'prisin' world. . . .

THE mariner left off abruptly. Then he juggled his stein abstractedly.

"Thirsty?" inquired the pseudo-grocery-clerk, rising.

"Talkin' *is* sort o' dry work," the other admitted.

"Then buy a drink!" chirruped the young man, cleaving the valves of the swinging door.

The Drama of the Jameson Raid

by L. Warburton

SHORTLY after the termination of the first Matabele war in 1893, a short, bullet-headed little Scotch doctor, with a firm jaw, clean-cut chin, stunted mustache, keen eyes, and a general air of good-natured forcible abruptness, was seated on the stoop of his house at Buluwayo, the capital of Rhodesia.

He was reading the life of Clive, one of England's soldier-heroes, a man untrained to be a soldier, yet designed to be the greatest of his century. Clive was an adventurer who, once having seen the power of military force, delighted to take out a couple of hundred soldiers, and thrash ten times as many Hindus and their French allies. He was a reckless, unscrupulous person, with no respect for international or private rights, in the balance of strict morality and probity of to-day weighed and found wanting.

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The doctor student of Clive's life smiled as he read. His eyes blazed with fire when the historian told in graphic terms how his hero by one bold coup smashed the power of the Indian potentates, and built up an empire. He shut the book with a snap, and said,

"I've a jolly good mind to march straight down off the plateau with the men I have, and settle the thing offhand."

"Settle what thing?" asked his companion who looked up, startled at the vehemence of the little Scot.

"Why, all this trouble in the Transvaal, of course. I've a jolly good mind to," answered the doctor, apparently disgusted that any one should misunderstand him. The only trouble he could conceive of at that time, now the Matabeles were crushed, was the dispute between the foreigners on the Rand and old President Krüger. A few native rebellions more or less could not be considered seriously, at such a crisis.

"Oh," said his friend, "I beg your pardon, doctor, but doesn't it strike you as rather a risky proceeding to attempt with two hundred men to march three hundred and fifty miles, and invade a civilized country with which Her Majesty is ostensibly at peace?"

"I don't see anything funny about it. Clive would have done it."

In those words Leander Starr Jameson, M. D., C. B., Administrator of the territories belonging to the British South African Chartered Company, expressed all he saw in the project of overturning the Boer Republic, and giving to the forty thousand "outlanders" of Johannesburg the political freedom they vainly clamored for. Being Scotch, he could not be expected to see anything humorous in the idea of invading a country and attacking a nation of well-armed natural fighters with a mere handful of quasi soldier police.

In those words Dr. Jameson unfolded the wild scheme that obsessed him for two long years, and finally led to his undertaking an adventure which for daring and dash is without parallel in the annals of history—known to-day, but almost forgotten, as the Jameson Raid.

Lord Clive was an Englishman who went out to India for his health and founded an empire for the British. Dr. Jameson—"Dr. Jim" to all Afrikanders; Sir Leander Starr Jameson, Bart., in official circles to-day—is a Scotsman who went out to Africa for his health and founded an empire.

Apart from their nationalities, and the fact that Clive died nearly a hundred years before Jameson was born, the only difference between the two men is the field each sought for his empire-building proclivities. Had Jameson been born in the eighteenth century, he would probably have done in India what Clive did. Had Clive lived in the nineteenth century and found India already an empire, he would probably have left Mafeking on a wild night ride, and fallen into the hands of the enemy.

Then Jameson didn't succeed in empire-building, you ask? Oh, yes, he did; but not directly. The Jameson Raid focused England's attention on the grievances of her subjects in the Transvaal, and engendered the bitterness which later led to the wiping out of the Boer republics, and the consolidation of the British Empire in South Africa.

The Empire was built as Jameson wished, but not just as he intended. Clive was not trained for soldiering; neither was Jameson. Clive was strong-willed, fiery in passion, impetuous in action, and never knew what danger was. Jameson has all these attributes, and moreover had the force of Clive's successful example ever before him from the moment he read the life of the great Indian conqueror. He was unlike the latter, perhaps, in that he had no sense of perspective, and possessed a greater degree of Quixotism.

He sincerely believed all the stories from the Rand, stories of injustice and oppression, and he believed that he had only to march in with a few devoted followers, and slay the dragon of tyranny. Whatever merits there were in the dispute between the foreigners and old President Krüger, every authority has agreed that Jameson was in the wrong; that his raid was unwarranted, unprecedented and unpardonable. Every civilized nation deprecated his conduct and supported the Boers. Britain was first among them to repudiate her subject's conduct and offer compensation to the Republic.

But adventurers are not concerned with the merits of the dispute. They know no politics and, even if they extend their sympathy to one side or the other, they are sufficiently large-hearted to admire dash and bravery no matter by whom it is exhibited, and whether it be shown in the right

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or wrong. They only want to know what a man has done. Every one has agreed that "Dr. Jim" was responsible for one of the most daring adventures of the nineteenth century, although it ended in glorious ignominy. What did Jameson do? Listen.

WERE THE BOERS TYRANTS?

IN 1895, affairs were approaching a crisis in the Transvaal. The rich mines of the Rand had attracted thousands of foreigners to Johannesburg. There were men from all parts of the world—the cosmopolitan population that is always found in a big mining-camp. Americans were there in hundreds. At their head was John Hayes Hammond, perhaps the best known mining-man in the world. The Boers, rightly or wrongly, whichever way you choose to look at it, refused the vote to these foreigners, except under almost impossible conditions. The "outlanders," as they were called by the Boers, clamored for redress of grievances and the enjoyment of the franchise.

Foremost in their ranks were the Americans, whose high ideals of freedom and citizenship were in hearty accord with the aims of the Britishers. Probably, as has been alleged, at the root of all the agitation was a dark design on the part of certain capitalists to seize control of the Transvaal and the mines, or it may be that they took advantage of the unrest to further their schemes for personal aggrandizement.

Be that as it may, they were at the head of what followed. They began to plot for a *coup* that would give the reformers on the Rand all they wanted, and achieve whatever personal objects they had in view.

Enter upon the scene Jameson.

"Dr. Jim" had been a surgeon in Kimberley in the days when Cecil Rhodes was cornering the diamond-market and becoming a millionaire. It was said of him that he was the kindest, most lovable of pig-headed Scotsmen ever known in the rough days of mining.

When, in the next year after the raid, Jameson was being tried, and was certain of a long term in jail, a cockney groom in a London stable hung about the court day after day. When the trial was nearing its close the cockney approached Jameson's leading lawyer, and asked him what sentence he thought the doctor would get.

"We'll try to get him free altogether, my man. Why are you so interested?" asked the eminent lawyer.

"Well, sir," was the reply, "whatever 'quod' he gets, I'd gladly do 'arf, stryte I would. 'E's the best friend I ever 'ad. 'E set my broken leg in Kimberley ten years ago w'en a blarsted 'orse broke it, an' 'e never charged nothink, an' 'e sat up all night wiv me. Better than a mother 'e was."

Jameson followed the fortunes of Rhodes. He abandoned his medical profession and accepted a civil post in the new territories which the genius of Rhodes won in South Africa. At the time this story opens he was Administrator of the vast empire of which Rhodes was the uncrowned king and, having seen the power of the hostile native chiefs broken by Clive-like *coups*, he could not understand why the same methods could not be applied in Krüger's case.

He thought over it for months, as the trouble in the Transvaal brewed and came to a head. One day he left Buluwayo and went to Cape Town. There he had a long talk with Rhodes. What transpired no one will ever know. Rhodes is dead, and Jameson is not the man to talk. From Cape Town he went to Johannesburg, and for days was in close conclave with the leaders of the Rand reform-movement.

He put a daring scheme before them; a scheme so bold that even they hesitated.

"It's as simple as A-B-C," said Jameson. "We'll soon have control of the Bechuana police, and you send me a letter of invitation to come to your assistance, and I'll come with every man of my force."

SECRET PLANS FOR THE RAID

A WEEK later he left with a signed but undated letter, which he dictated himself, urging him to come to the aid of the distressed people of the Rand. He left it to the conspirators to arrange what rising of the people they liked, the rising to coïncide with his departure for Johannesburg. In Cape Town he again saw Rhodes, and then set out for Buluwayo.

Simultaneously a banking-account was opened in Johannesburg, and before many weeks had passed it amounted in total to over £70,000. This was in September of 1895. On October seventeenth, a proclamation was issued placing a certain portion of the Bechuanaland protectorate under the

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administration of the British South Africa Company, and immediately Jameson began to concentrate his troopers in close proximity to the western border of the Transvaal.

Preparations for the raid had commenced. A camp was laid out at Pitsani Pothlugo, and there Jameson's military officers drilled the men ostensibly for an expedition against some troublesome native chiefs. At the same time arms were being smuggled into Johannesburg and Mafeking and being paid for out of the fund established by Rhodes, Hammond & Co. Agents of Jameson went into the Transvaal, and along the line of march the daring raider proposed to take, stores were purchased or erected, and stocked with food or forage.

What, precisely, was Jameson's scheme? He planned to dash into the Transvaal, travel night and day with six hundred men and some artillery, traverse the one hundred and eighty miles between Pitsani and Johannesburg with incredible rapidity and arrive on the Rand before the Boers could assemble to check him, or stay the rising in the city, which was to take place immediately before he crossed the border. He could hope for no official support from the British Government but, relying on the letter of invitation, he trusted to justify his actions, especially as he firmly believed they would be successful.

His preparations left no doubt in his mind that he would succeed, and even the shrewd mining-men of the Rand were hypnotised by his electrical presence into that belief. Just what was to happen no one seems to have decided. The general idea, however, was that Johannesburg should speak with one voice, depose Krüger and his bureaucracy and establish a new form of government under which all should be happy.

Once the revolution was an accomplished fact, any breach of international comity of which Jameson might be guilty would be forgiven, and doubtless he spent those few months of preparation happy in the belief that he was going to do something grand and noble, and that at its conclusion he would be hailed as the Clive of Africa.

The secret of the contemplated raid was well kept. Not a suspicion seemed to be entertained by the Government of the Republic and, with Johannesburg filling with arms, and Pitsani rapidly assuming the character of a mobilization-ground, the conspirators calmly awaited the outcome of their plans, or rather those of the confident little *medico*.

Whole volumes of letters and telegrams in cipher passed between Johannesburg, Cape Town and Mafeking, the conspirators always speaking of themselves as the "Development-Syndicate," and referring to the raid and the rising as the "polo-tournament."

It was arranged that the "tournament" should take place at the end of the year, on a date to be decided upon, and Jameson held closely to his camp, awaiting the signal.

Something went wrong in Johannesburg a day or two before he was to start and, instead of the signal to come in, Jameson received an urgent message telling him not to move on any account, as the Boers had gotten wind of the affair, and the conspirators were not ready.

Saturday, December 28, 1895, at noon was the time planned for the rising in Johannesburg, and Jameson was to start at eight in the evening, using his letter as an excuse.

When the messages advising delay reached him, Jameson tore them up in a rage.

"The fools!" he said. "What are they frightened of? Their own fears, that's all. I'm going as I arranged. They'll follow my lead. They must."

And he telegraphed to that effect. Again the Johannesburg committee implored him to stay his hand. They were in treaty with Krüger for the much-needed reforms, and wished to wait. Jameson sent off a characteristic reply. "I shall enter the Transvaal precisely as arranged, and in accordance with the letter of invitation. Nothing can stop me."

The committee wired frantically, telling him he would spoil everything, and advising him to await their messengers. He agreed to delay his start one day.

John Hayes Hammond sent off his own trusted American aide, Captain Heaney. The committee sent another man on the fleetest horse they could get, with relays every ten miles, to ride across country and stop Jameson. Heaney was put on a special train and despatched on the long journey down to Cape Colony, and up to Mafeking. Every train was side-tracked for him, even to the Governor's special. He reached Jameson in time to find him standing by his saddled horse, ready to cross the border.

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Even Rhodes telegraphed that Jameson must not leave on any account, but Jameson had already cut the wires and the message never reached him. There is a dark suspicion that Rhodes waited till he knew it was too late, but the most probable thing is that, having no blind eye like old Nelson, to which he might place his telescope, Jameson decided to avoid receipt of all awkward orders, and so cut the wires.

In his camp at Pitsani Pothlugo, Jameson had three hundred and seventy-three mounted men. At Mafeking, a few miles south, he had one hundred and sixty men. The artillery for the two forces consisted of eight Maxim machine-guns, one twelve and one-half pounder and two seven-pounder guns. Colonel Sir John Willoughby, an English army-officer, was in command of the military, but subject to Jameson. At Mafeking the small force which was to unite with the Pitsani column was commanded by Colonel Raleigh Grey. The troops were all fresh and well mounted, ignorant of the work in front of them, but eager to break camp and fight the natives—which was the job they believed they were assembled for.

It was on Sunday afternoon, December twenty-ninth, that Jameson had his men paraded for inspection. Alone he walked into the hollow square, and fixed each bronzed and bearded trooper with his keen gray eyes, as he slowly passed down the lines. Then he stepped back a few paces and in an impressive silence began to speak in short, sharp Scottish accents.

He told them for the first time what they were assembled for. He pictured the misery in Johannesburg, where men writhed under the heel of a despotic government that denied the rights of freemen to Britishers, Americans and all foreigners alike. He told them of the rising that even then was taking place; of the danger to the women and children, and of the longing eyes that at that moment were turned to the only British force within a thousand miles. With rugged eloquence he told all this, and at the dramatic moment he pulled out the letter he had himself dictated, and read it. There was a murmur in the ranks.

"Now, men," shouted Jameson, "let those who like step back, and take no further part in this glorious enterprise. The rest will come with me. We start this evening."

There was a wild shout of applause, a ringing cheer. The one or two waverers stepped back, and stepped forward again, all pledged to the undertaking under the leadership of the little Doctor. Down in Mafeking the same scene was enacted. Colonel Grey did the speaking.

"Men," he said, "we can't keep it from you any longer. It is all bosh about fighting Linchwe. We're going into the Transvaal to help the people of Johannesburg. Those who don't want to come stand out. The others will march at eight o'clock."

At Mafeking several men did refuse to accompany the force. The hypnotic presence of Jameson was not there. The column moved at the appointed time and joined Jameson at a place called Malmani.

Let us revert to the camp at Pitsani. Jameson had agreed under pressure from Johannesburg to wait the arrival of Captain Heaney. It was dusk when the American arrived, travel-stained and weary. He delivered his message. He related what had transpired in Johannesburg to occasion the delay.

"All right, Captain," said, Jameson. "Thank you for the news and the message. We take no notice of it, but move at eight o'clock. Go and get some rest."

Heaney gazed at the doctor for a moment.

"Can you give me a horse?" he asked.

"Yes," Jameson replied. "Where are you going?"

"Going?" said Heaney, "I'm going with you!" And he did.

A police inspector under instructions from the Cape Government rode out to the camp just as the troops were leaving, and warned Jameson of the consequences of his action, urging him to abandon the raid. "That's all right, sir," replied Jameson. "You've done your duty. I'm going to do mine. Good-by, old chap," and away he rode at the head of his devoted followers.

AN ARMY OF ADVENTURERS

WHAT sort of men were these that had chosen to follow the fiery little Scot? Well, they were all sorts, no better and no worse than such a body of men might be expected to be. For the most part they were Englishmen in whom the love of adventure was strong. To these Africa had appealed as the one place where excitement might be met with. There were new fields to conquer, savage natives to fight and

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fortunes to be made. Others there were, born in the country, who had escaped from the humdrum life of a city to find profitable employment in the sparkling air of the upper veldt.

There were remittance-men from all parts of the world. There were Americans who had swung a lariat in Texas, or driven a drill in Nevada. There were Frenchmen from the Foreign Legion, and there were Australians. There were ne'er-do-wells and gentlemen, cashiered officers and men who had seen more respectable, if not better, days than those they passed in the Company's service—a mixed crew of tough characters and reckless souls. They were all adventurers, and a man like Jameson was easily their idol.

He did things first and counted the consequences afterward. It is untrue to say, as has been said, that the men were fortified by drink before they set out, and were stimulated by it as they rode to their doom. Drunken men would never have ridden as they did, nor fought as they fought. The only man the worse for liquor from the moment they set out was the man who did the most damage to the fortunes of the column by not doing enough damage to the telegraph-line he was sent ahead to cut.

It is reported that this man was told off to ride into the Transvaal an hour ahead of the column and cut the telegraph-wires connecting Mafeking with Johannesburg. He got drunk at a wayside shanty, spent an hour in cutting the wire fence of an innocent Boer farmer and slept blissfully while Jameson and his men clattered past the Boer telegraph-office from which the news was soon speeding to Pretoria that an armed force had invaded the republic.

Of such episodes are the tragedies of war made. The Boer Government knew of Jameson's invasion an hour after he crossed the border. He counted on a clear day's start.

All through the night the column rode in proper formation; scouts thrown out in advance and on the flanks; guns and ammunition-carts in the center. Well might the old grizzled burgher, stirring from his sleep at dawn, gaze in wonder at that compact cavalcade of grim, determined men, and speculate on its mission. Well might he mount his own sturdy veldt pony and ride swiftly away to acquaint his district Commandant with the startling news that the hated "Rooineks" were again in the land of his fathers, and had commandeered two bags of his mealies, and stolen two coils of sun-cured Boer tobacco.

As Jameson advanced, the news of his coming flew ahead of him. Two hours after daybreak the first person to question his right of invasion appeared. It was Lieutenant Eloff, a nephew of the venerable old President of the Republic. With six police at his back he boldly rode up and demanded Jameson's surrender.

"Dr. Jim" smiled good-naturedly, took the rifles from the Boers and sent them packing with this message of good-will:

"Tell your Commandant," he said, "that we are here on a peaceful mission, and shall harm no one. That is our way," and he pointed ahead with his riding-whip to where the road to Johannesburg writhed its way over the rolling treeless expanse of rich-grassed country.

By seven o'clock that night the column had traversed seventy miles without any trouble. The men were in good order and condition, but the horses were tired. Next morning they camped at the farm of a worthy old Boer, a member of the Volksraad, or parliament. There the troopers had two hours' rest, and found remounts awaiting them.

Meinheer Malan was aghast at the sight of such a column of armed men, and vigorously he protested against the outrage upon his beloved country, an outrage which unwittingly he had helped by the sale to one of Jameson's agents of some of his best horses.

The Doctor offered him consolation and a cigar, and rode away with his dusty band. The day was hot, and the way tiring, but there was not a word of grumbling from the adventurous raiders as night fell, and they still hurried on. Only another day, and they would be within striking-distance of Johannesburg, where they had been told a coöperating force might be expected.

So far the raid had been nothing more than a tiring ride. Many of them hoped it would provide something more exciting. Their hope was to be fulfilled. Before another night fell they were to taste the bitterness of defeat; the abandonment of hope; the knowledge that they had come on a fool's errand. Their peaceful mission was to end in a bloody tragedy, yet the strangest thing of all was that they never dreamed of defeat.

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At noon next day there had been no sign of resistance to their advance. A few Boers had been seen hanging about the skirts of the column, but when the scouts were thrown out these cleared off. At one o'clock two cyclists rode in with messages from Johannesburg. From the hollow tubes of their seat-pillars they produced the long-looked-for communications from the committee. In few words which breathed no suspicion of impending disaster, uttered no word of reproach for ignored instructions, these messages told Jameson that his coming was known and eagerly awaited. They asked how he fared.

The Doctor sent the men off with a message of thanks, and a promise of early success. The Boers captured the cyclists and read the message with infinite relish. Two hours later a representative of the British agent at Pretoria rode in and handed Jameson a communication. It told him in forcible terms that his action was repudiated by the British Government, and that he was to retire at once from the Transvaal. He must expect no protection from his Government for his rash conduct, and no forgiveness for his unpardonable affront to a friendly power.

"Sir," said Jameson to the messenger, "tell his Excellency that, were I disposed to obey his orders, I could not. I have come this far, and have no food for my men, none for my horses. I must go on to Johannesburg or Pretoria for that reason, but in any case I am not an officer of the British Government, and decline to acknowledge its authority over my action. Forward!"

BOER BULLETS

THE column advanced in the direction of Krügersdorp, a small town a few miles ahead. The Boers were fast appearing on the left flank and ahead. Sir John Willoughby extended his scouts farther, the mule drivers plied their whips, the troopers spurred on their jaded horses and the weary raiders pushed ahead. Again there was a halt. This time it was a white flag, fluttering at the muzzle of a rifle, and waved from a small kopje. The troops saw it and cheered. The Boers were few, Johannesburg had played its part and risen in its armed wrath and the Government was ready to treat with the invaders before a shot was fired. Such thoughts ran through the minds of the ignorant troopers.

"See what they want," said Jameson, impatient of the several delays, and tired of the eternal argument that seemed to weave itself about his simple task. An officer rode out and met the truce-bearer. It was no message of submission he received, but a peremptory demand from no less a valiant old fighter than Commandant Cronje to deliver up their arms and surrender. Failing that, said the man who had beaten the British fifteen years before at Potchefstrom, but a few miles away, he would be compelled to wipe the invaders off the earth.

Jameson smiled and sent off his customary answer—his mission was peace, his objective Johannesburg, and nothing on earth would stop him getting there, not even his desire for peace.

The troops heard the ultimatum and the answer furnished by their idolized leader. Their cheers reached the Boer lines two miles away.

It was late afternoon on Wednesday, January 1, 1896, when the first shot was fired. The column was only twenty-five miles from Johannesburg, from which assistance could readily be had. So easy had his march been that Jameson decided to enter Krügersdorp and, seizing the railway, proceed at once to Pretoria, where he would bring Krüger and his cabinet to their knees, appoint a provisional Government and make a New Year's gift to the people of Johannesburg—a gift in the shape of a concession of all their claims, and a brand-new form of government such as the people of the Rand had hungered for.

He ordered a vigorous advance on Krügersdorp as the first shots rang out from the ridge behind which the little town lay. At the very center of that ridge stood the Queen's Mine battery-house, round which a few Boers were seen casually watching the movements of the column strung out across the veldt.

Gaily the troopers rode on, with this iron building as their objective. The Boer fire, desultory though it had been, ceased, and the men trotted merrily along. They were within five hundred yards of the ridge when a hell of fire burst from it, reddening the heat-mists which still clung about the sun-baked rocks. A score of saddles were emptied, and the advancing column stopped abruptly. The trumpets blared the advance and, recovering from their shock and

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momentary confusion, even while the hail of lead still whistled through their extended ranks, the raiders dashed on. They were the men who had faced the wild charges of the maddened Matabele *impis*, when the assegais and spears had rained upon them. They were not the men to ride two days and three nights and fly at the first sign of battle.

At the gallop, they charged the ridge. It was a charge that must end in disaster. Unknown to the lea ers of the column, the Boers were in tremendous force on the ridge, although not a score had been seen. The few shots had done what the wily Cronje anticipated. They had proved a bait to the eager troopers. The bullets flew thicker, and struck oftener. Man after man went down, and there were no others to take their places. The full force of the column was not engaged. Even if it had been, the result would have been no different. The men were saddle-worn and tired. They were not made of stone. They were flesh and blood.

They did their best, but they could not face that leaden storm. They rode back, leaving the veldt strewn with their wounded and dead. The ridge was held by a thousand Boers, with the battery-house as their headquarters. Jameson ordered his artillery to shell them out of it. The shells went through and through the big iron building. Some of them burst in it. There was a precipitate flight of burghers from the house, but not from the ridge. They threw themselves flat behind the rocks and the shrapnel flew harmlessly about them.

Again the troopers advanced, under cover of the artillery-fire, and again they came back.

Night had fallen, and Jameson drew off his little force. He led them off the road and away to the south to avoid the ridge. It was hopeless trying to enter Krügersdorp. He had lost heavily, and his men were dispirited by their reverse. Another messenger came in from Johannesburg, and this time again the cheerful Quixote returned a laconic message. There had been fighting, but he was on his way all right, and would be glad to see a few men to escort him into the Mecca of his pilgrimage.

Well into the night he rode, skirting the Boer position.

During the night there was a sound of wild firing from the direction of Krügersdorp. Jameson was sure it was the advance of a coöperating column from Johannesburg, and he was for marching to the sound of the guns straight away—a sound maxim of warfare.

His officers counseled a halt, and the tired troops and horses threw themselves on the ground to snatch a few hours' sleep. Unfortunately for the little force, now sadly depleted by losses of men and horses, the firing was not that of a relief-column from the city. It betokened the arrival of another strong contingent of the enemy from Pretoria, the burghers who had resisted Jameson's advance that day giving vent to their pleasure in a *feu de joie*.

A BLOODY AMBUSCADE

LONG before daylight the raiders were on the march, hoping by the stealth of their departure and the quickness of their movements to slip by the Boers and make their final dash on Johannesburg. They had with them a burgher guide, and he led them in a southeasterly direction across an unfinished railway-embankment, over the *spruit* and straight toward a narrow neck between a range of hills. On the left of the line of advance was a high cliff. Straight ahead behind the neck was Doornkop, and on the right was rising ground over which the Boers from Krügersdorp had a clear march. Cronje was not the man to be caught napping. His keen eye had detected the defensive strength of the position to which the British column would advance in the morning, and under cover of darkness he had been busy.

Doornkop was strongly held, as also was the cliff running parallel to the road. Gladly he permitted the raiders to advance unmolested into the *cul-de-sac* which fronted them. The outcome was foretold. The Boers numbered now over fifteen hundred, and on the defensive they held a position that was impregnable to even twice their own number, let alone a weak force such as Jameson had at his command.

The British trusted their guide, and there is no reason to believe that he was anything more than a shockingly bad strategist. He paid the penalty of ignorance, and was one of the first to be killed that morning when the Boers recognized him as a traitor.

Hopefully the raiders marched on. They met with the first opposition when they

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attempted to pass the river, the crossing of which was held by a comparatively small party of Boers. Vainly the leading troopers tried to push their way over it. The watchers by the ford were picked marksmen, and their every shot told. Presently the raiders were fighting desperately for a clear path and, when success seemed to be close, they found themselves under a murderous fire from the right flank. Hastily the guns were unlimbered, and, with the Maxims, were brought into action to clear the ridge and the ford.

They accomplished their purpose and once more the column advanced—farther into the trap from which there was no escape. The Boers holding the ridges in front checked the march and, the enemy on the flank being reïnforced, Jameson was in a worse plight than ever.

Under a blazing sun the Maxims were worked till the water boiled in their jackets. There was none to replenish it and one after the other the machine-guns jambed and were useless. Still the fight raged on, the Boers secure in their fastnesses, and the British exposed to a deadly cross-fire which knocked over man after man.

At noon, Jameson was stuck badly where he had arrived at nine o'clock. Presently there was belch of smoke on the left, then another and another, and shells began to fall among the harassed troopers. The Staats Artillerie had come up, and from an advantageous position poured in its fire. The position was hopeless. Over eighty men were killed or wounded, many had been taken prisoners and, with no sign of help from the thousands of armed men in Johannesburg to whose aid he had so rashly rushed, Jameson reluctantly acquiesced in the demand from one of his officers to hoist the white flag and save further loss of life, indeed prevent what must have resolved into a massacre.

Hurriedly a dirty white cloth was snatched from a Kaffir mule-driver, and hoisted on the point of a bayonetted rifle. The firing ceased. Then for the first time Jameson realized that he was hopelessly beaten. The thing he had never dreamed of had come about. The thing he had dreamed of had vanished into thin air. Sadly he dropped his head on his arms and wept the bitter tears of disappointment. For a moment he was overcome.

"My day has come," he said. "Make the best terms you can for the men. They've done their best."

Then he braced himself to meet his conqueror with dignity. Sir John Willoughby conducted the negotiations. He first asked that the column should be permitted to surrender its arms and retire over the border. Old Cronje was scornful, as well he might be. The raiders were not to escape as lightly as that.

"I must have an unconditional surrender within five minutes, or we shall open fire again," he said.

BARGAINING FOR LIFE

WILLOUGHBY still bargained. This time all he asked for was that an assurance be given that the lives of the raiders should be safe. Cronje promised it and demanded that the surrender be hastened. A report had reached him that an armed force of "outlanders" had left Johannesburg, and he was anxious to have his prisoners safe under guard before engaging another force.

The report was merely a rumor based on the fact that a squadron of Bennington's Horse had ridden out to meet Jameson, but had been recalled by the committee. Willoughby took Cronje's promise to Jameson. The doctor nodded his approval, and at two o'clock four hundred tattered, dirty, famished and thirsty adventurers gloomily piled their arms and asked for food. Some of them did not care even to that extent, but threw themselves down on the veldt and slept peacefully. They had ridden well and fought well. Now that it was all over they slept well. A sad number of them slept the sleep of death.

The Boers treated their captives kindly. They fed them, tended the wounded and buried the dead. Then they marched them off to Pretoria and lodged them in jail to ruminate over the sadness of defeat. Before Jameson and his officers departed they were told that they must not count on Cronje's promise to spare their lives. Jameson was thunder-struck. For himself he cared not. He had staked his all on the venture and had lost. Life had no further attraction to him, but what of the brave and enthusiastic young officers whom he had led into the mire?

"The lives of these men are not guaranteed?" he asked.

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"No," was the abrupt reply, "Commandant Cronje had no authority to make such terms. The Commandant-General repudiates them."

Jameson flew into a passion, and denounced the Boers as treacherous villains. One account says that he begged for a rifle, and fought his captors until he was forcibly silenced, but that story is hardly correct. He was amazed at the perfidy of the Commandant-General, but bowed his head to the inevitable, which in his case, at least, he felt sure was death. He felt that the people of Johannesburg had deserted him in his hour of sore need, but he had no word of reproach for them, though his men called them craven-hearted.

Johannesburg had not risen as Jameson had anticipated. The conspirators had informed Jameson that the rising could not take place as arranged, and counseled him to delay his raid. He had refused, with the consequences related. The committee was staggered when the news came that the daring Doctor had crossed the border, but there was no time for them to do anything to help him, and when he was fighting desperately less than a score of miles away, and his sad plight was known, it was too late to do anything. Thousands of Boers surrounded the town, and Boer guns frowned down upon the excited populace. The raid would have been a success had Johannesburg risen at the time appointed, or even at the moment when the news was received that Jameson had started, but it was not to be.

Johannesburg went mad when it was known that the Doctor and his men had been defeated and were prisoners, but the talk of an attack on Pretoria was idle, futile. The people could only hope that the brave little Scot's life would be spared, and all efforts were concentrated on saving him and his men from the vengeance of the fiery section of the burghers and their Government.

President Krüger acted with great magnanimity, and handed over Jameson and his raiders to the British Government for trial. "Dr. Jim" and his officers were taken to London, tried, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

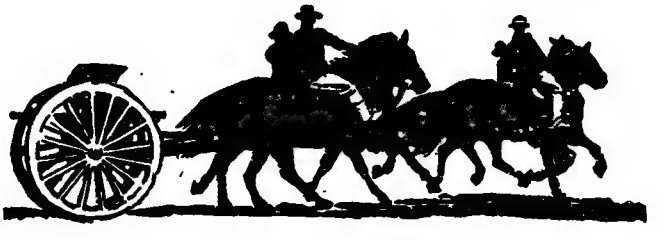
John Hayes Hammond and his fellow conspirators on the Rand were tried by the High Court at Pretoria. Four of the ringleaders were sentenced to death, a sentence which happily was commuted, and fifty-nine others to two years' imprisonment, a fine of £2,000, and three years' banishment.

"GLORIOUS IGNOMINY" AND THE JAMESON OF TO-DAY

SO THE raid ended. This is what the mouthpiece of the reform-committee at Johannesburg said the day after Jameson's surrender. Ask yourself if it was not justified:

"A brilliant career has ended in glorious ignominy. The ignominy will be but a fleeting shadow. The lurid glory of Dr. Jameson's epic march and surrender will be held in passionate remembrance so long as the hearts of English—nay, so long as the hearts of all who are men—continue to beat true to their best traditions. Dr. Jameson was a hero before. He is ten times a hero to-day and, if it can be any consolation to him and his gallant officers and men in their bitter captivity, they may receive the proud though heart-broken assurances of this city that their names are enshrined forever in the pages of its history; the fault redeemed, obliterated and forgotten; the motive transfigured with a radiance which will never die."

No truer words were ever printed. To-day "Dr. Jim" is a baronet, lately a member of the British King's Privy Council, recently retired Prime Minister of Cape Colony, but still "Dr. Jim" to the remaining members of the brave band who accompanied him on the raid.



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The Great Chewing-Gum Boycott

by George Vaux Bacon

PHILIP BARNETT was all that his father, John Barnett, President of the Chewing-Gum Trust, could wish for in a son of twenty-one years. He had been a star man on the football-squad of his college, and had graduated with honors into the Trust's selling-department, where he rapidly made good.

Then, one evening, he walked into the Polonaise Theater and sat down in a front-row seat. Thousands of men besides Philip had walked into that same theater, been bored or interested by the show and gone their way. But——

Philip's seat was the first one on the left aisle in the center, and there he waited patiently till the orchestra struck up an overture, the footlights flashed at the bottom of the curtain and the curtain itself majestically and heavily rose.

A king, ludicrously miserable because of chronic boredom induced by a kingdom which was always so happy that it produced no pleasing variety to his kingly sense, choked a few incoherent stanzas through his larynx. Then there was a burst of melody and from the wings poured in rhythmic gaiety the best and poorest paid people in a musical comedy—the chorus. In glittering gems and swishing silks and smiling their infinite smiles they pirouetted back and forth, in wave after wave of graceful, animated color surging and receding upon a shoal of faces.

Philip, like every normal young man, was interested in girls. Girls with the added enchantment of the fairy-land behind the scenes tripped before him in rippling tides of harmony. His eye wandered idly from supple body and smiling face to face. Beginning with the right, he studied every one till at last he came to her who danced and smiled immediately before him.

She was a tall girl, a beautifully lithe and graceful form indicated through her costume which, cut in the fashion of the day, fitted her figure closely. Her shoulders were bare and dazzlingly white; the poise of her head upon an exquisitely molded neck had that indefinable air of gallantry you see sometimes in the manner in which some men and women carry their heads. Her profile, as he saw it turning in the dance, was as regular as that of an Attic muse. The lips of any one upon the stage are the most difficult feature to define because of the ease of making them up. But when he saw her eyes, his heart gave a

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bound into his throat and stayed there.

Such eyes had the Sphinx gazing upon those who had loved her and had died for the lust of her cruelty. Such eyes had Judith when she looked into those of Holofernes, making him drunk with wine and her, so that she might slay him. Such eyes has a mother for her babe when the pangs of birth are over and the agonizing power of mother-love is bursting in her heart—the impenetrable, infinite, loving-cruel eyes of woman—the eyes of pain and wisdom and mad happiness.

Philip, enthralled by a new enchantment that is yet as old as the race itself, gazed into her eyes and forgot everything else. She was a wild thing, and danced her daring dances with a swing that spoke love of them, staring at the same time with her weird eyes out into the auditorium with an audacity which approached contempt—contempt for her audience that they should care to see, contempt for herself that it should be she who danced for them. She had brown hair that fell in ringlets on her white neck and brushed it softly while she danced.

Almost before he knew it, the first act had ended and Philip was staring again at the impossible landscape, decorated with onion-like mid-Victorian urns, upon the curtain.

Clever make-up, powder, peroxide and grease-paint, and you have her in any chorus, eh? Not always. We generalize too much, and even every chorus-girl is different from every other one.

Here is a secret: Sometimes things are exactly as they look. Frequently the most delicious dainties come in the prettiest box.

A theater-usher will lie St. Peter out of Heaven and scale the Rock of Gibraltar single-handed for a half-dollar. Philip called one over to him, and into a hungry palm softly pressed a five-dollar bill. Then he took a pencil and a piece of note-paper out of his pocket and wrote the following beautifully youthful epistle:

DEAR LADY:

We do not know each other because Fate has been unkind. May I suggest that we ignore a cruel Fate and introduce ourselves, as I am most anxious to meet you? I will be at the first corner east of the theater right after the last act, dressed in a yellow cravenette, with an unlighted cigar in my hand. Please come. Sincerely,

PHILIP BARNETT.

WITH a bored air the usher took the note back and, elbowing his way through powder and paint, reached the lady whom Philip had indicated to him as "the one on the left" as she was slipping into a gown of silver and green in the long hall which the chorus used *en masse* as a dressing-room.

"Hello, Lil," said he, with the impertinence born of long familiarity with the darkened theater divested of its glamour, "I have a note for youse from a young guy what's gone dots over yuh."

Lily LaRue took the note and read it. Looking up from the end of it she encountered the usher staring at her. Wisdom was age-old and evil in his young eyes. But she was used to that and, producing a pencil from her make-up box, scribbled a reply on the back of Philip's note and handed it back.

"Gee, a turn-down," thought the usher with glee. He liked to see the swells "get it in the neck." He found Philip lingering in the lobby and gave him his answer.

It read:

My week's salary is about spent and I am hungry. If you still want to meet me, be at the corner you spoke of twenty minutes after the last curtain.

LILY LARUE.

So it was not a turn-down after all.

"Hungry! Poor girl!" commented Philip putting the note in his inner coat pocket. He was too young, of course, to know that chorus-girls are always hungry; too young to have a girl's hunger arouse anything in him but sympathy and pity. It is not Youth that preys on Beauty for a crust of bread.

The curtain went up on the second and last act. Lily LaRue, in her emerald gown with the argent sheen, danced again before him. He gazed into her strange eyes with increasing rapture. She saw, where the footlights cast a reflected glow over the first two rows, a young man with blue eyes and a face she liked.

"I wish that he were the man who's going to meet me to-night," she said to herself in the whirl of a Terpsichorean arabesque.

When the curtain finally dropped after the last encore, Philip picked up his hat and pushed his way through the throng. Reaching the sidewalk, he put on his yellow cravenette, pulled a cigar from his pocket and, holding it in his hand, stood at the

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appointed corner, feeling, it must be confessed, the slightest bit foolish. He did not have his father's automobile with him nor any of the other attributes of the great wealth of which he was the heir. He looked simply the well-dressed young man of the modern city who might be anything from a bookkeeper to the district manager of a Predatory Corporation.

He even smiled to himself. Youth is not overinnocent in Chicago, and he knew, as the cool evening wind brushed his face, that he had in all probability fallen in love with a creature of his imagination made attractive to his senses by grease-paint, costumes, cleverly arranged lights and rouge. The reality, he thought, in some flamboyant costume, would undoubtedly be impossible upon the street.

However, he was one of those who stick things out, and he would see the disillusioning process through and take her to a quiet café somewhere for a good dinner—he owed her that at least on the strength of his note.

"Good evening," said a quiet voice at his elbow, slightly tense with a subtle lack of ease.

Before him stood a slender, brown-haired maid of some twenty-odd Summers whose complexion the insidious make-up had not yet ruined and who was clad in a neat blue walking-skirt and Norfolk jacket and one of those sensible conical-shaped hats guilty of no ornament except a single feather. In the glare of the street-lamp, her theatrical eyes were still wonderful.

"I am Philip Barnett," he said. "Are you Lily LaRue?"

"Yes."

Her voice had a charm of its own.

"Oh, you *are* he, aren't you?" she suddenly cried.

"Who?"

"I saw you sitting in the front row and I remembered you."

He was flattered.

"Let's go to the Annex and have something to eat," he suggested. He had forgotten the idea of the "quiet café."

"All right, Mr. Barnett."

"Don't 'mister' me!"

"I will until I have known you an hour. One must be formal on short acquaintance."

He laughed and hailed a taxi.

"I'd rather walk," she said.

He looked at her curiously and dismissed the disappointed chauffeur.

"I will take your arm to make up for it," she smiled.

ARM in arm they crossed the street and made their way to that midnight bourne where modern revelry stalks, white-vested and crimson-gowned, among the terminals of Pan, gigantic vases and fluted columns of a dead and rotted civilization.

At the side of the famous fountain he enthroned her in one of the enormously high-backed chairs and took his place at the other side of the checker-board mosaic-topped bronze table in front of her.

Her lips, more crimson from the red blood in them than rouge makes the lips of many, twisted into a quizzical smile.

"Have you brought me here just to stare at me?"

"No," he said, "Excuse me. I brought you here to have something to eat, because you are hungry, and to ask you a question. Would you rather go to the grill where we can get a good meal?"

She deserted her fortifications.

"I guess I'm not so hungry as I imagined. I think a club sandwich will be plenty."

The sandwiches were brought, together with a bottle of stout for him and a claret lemonade for her.

She was sipping the royal purple of the latter through a straw when he said,

"Now I will ask the question."

For some unaccountable reason, a slow flush mounted to her cheeks. Without removing her lips from the straw, she glanced up and into his blue eyes for the fraction of a second, then dropped them suddenly.

"I," said Philip, "am the son of John Barnett, the President of the Universal Chicle Company, and therefore, through no virtue of my own, the virtual possessor of more money than I could possibly spend. The money I can get along without. But I have decided that I can't get along without you. If I appear forward, please pardon me. I have had more experience in selling chewing-cum than in proposing."

Slowly she raised her head till her eyes met his squarely. The color had left her cheeks.

"I do not consider that you are rude in proposing marriage to me, for a proposal of marriage to a woman by an honorable man

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I think is always a compliment to her; but—" and she suddenly bit her lip—"why should you ruin your compliment by an implied insult?"

Philip slowly flushed with the knowledge that, in common with all who have wealth, he had taken for granted that it was all that interested anybody.

"You thought that I have been wondering all the time whether you are rich or not?"

"No," he said slowly.

"No—but yes."

"What of it?" he asked. "If I knew that you cared only for my money and would marry me just for it, I would marry you and give it to you so that you would be happy. Then, because I don't think that the happiness you would get from money alone would last long, I would make you love me by being good to you in so many other ways that there wouldn't be anything else for you to do but love me, and then we would both be happy after a little while for always."

Philip Barnett was the son of his father. He wanted what he wanted when he wanted it—and usually got it.

She leaned toward him, her gray eyes shining and just a suspicion of a quiver on her lips.

"Because I am an abominably selfish girl, Philip," she said, "I *will* marry you."

A waiter with the gifts of an automaton removed the half empty dishes and glasses. Philip paid the check and, with his suddenly acquired fiancée, walked out of the glare of the hotel to Michigan Avenue on which they went north, across the Rush Street Bridge, to the boarding-house where she had her room.

She stood on the lower step looking at him from under the rim of her hat.

"Good night," he began.

Was it the end of a fantastic comedy?

"My real name is Mary Heath, boy," she whispered and suddenly kissed him full and sweetly on the lips.

"That's why I'm selfish," she murmured when he had caught her to him, "I don't want any other girl ever to——"

She broke away from him, ran up the steps and disappeared.

The next morning they were married and Mary Heath resigned by telephone from "The King of Joyland" and changed her name for good.

AT FOUR in the afternoon Philip and Mary appeared at the offices of the Universal Chicle Company. Philip demanded to see his father, master of the gum that made America famous.

They were ushered in and stood before the broad desk behind which John Barnett sat scanning letters and orders for a full minute without recognition of their presence.

When he looked up, his glasses dropped from his nose and he glared at the two, his eyes traveling swiftly from one to the other, the quick surmise of his active brain expressing itself in an ominous frown.

"Who is the young woman, Philip?" he snapped.

"My wife," said Philip.

"Impossible!"

"I married her this morning."

"Impossible, I say; you must get a divorce at once. You are too young."

Philip laughed.

"I don't see why, father. You married when you were younger than I am, and it didn't seem to hurt your prospects much."

"Who is she?" demanded Barnett père.

"She *was* Mary Heath."

"Never heard of her."

Mary turned to Philip.

"Just a moment, Philip. Mr. Barnett," she continued addressing the chewing-gum magnate, "I am an ex-chorus-girl, and therefore of course susceptible to criticism, just or unjust, which you appear ready to make. However——"

John Barnett's face had grown purple. Like all low-bred men who make money, he was quick to cast reflections on the caste of others, and had determined on a brilliant marriage for his son. He interrupted:

"So, I have educated my son and brought him up as a gentleman to have him marry a chorus-girl, eh? Well, you can consider yourself as my son no longer, Philip. Good-by."

"Good-by," said Philip and, without another word, he took Mary by the hand and walked out of his father's office.

When they reached the deserted corridor without, he said,

"Mary, you are worth so much more than my father's money that I have to laugh. But what am I without it?"

"The dearest young man in the world," said Mary. "You can make your own. I'd rather have it than your father's anyway."

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Which would indicate that Mary was a clever girl.

Philip was not altogether bankrupt. He had a few hundred dollars in the bank which he had legitimately earned from the trust as one of its salesmen. This would last him for a while, but he knew that his job went with his break with his father, and he would have to hunt another one.

He went to one of the big Loop hotels and hired rooms, with the determination to spend the evening thinking the situation over and finding out what he could take up at once.

When they were in their rooms, he surrounded himself with a cloud of pipe-smoke while Mary indulged in a short-story magazine.

"By gosh, I don't know where to start, Mary," he said presently.

Mary raised her eyes from the thrilling adventures of a salt-water bandit of the South Seas and looked dreamily out of the window at a lawyer's office in the sky-scraper opposite.

"As Sid Manheimer, the first manager I got a job with used to say," she remarked, "the thing to do is to get down to fundamentals. Your father is in the chewing-gum business."

"That's what."

She wrinkled her forehead and continued gazing out of the window.

"I suppose if your father were to discover that you are as big a man as he is in his own business, he'd be apt to be sorry for what—I led you into?"

"Don't talk like that, Mary," pleaded Philip. "You know how I feel."

Mary smiled out through the window. She was not strong on theoretical psychology; but she knew human nature pretty well.

"If you could put your father out of business, he'd think that anything you have done was better than anything he'd ever done, wouldn't he? I judged him to be somewhat that way."

"Yes," said Philip, "I think he would. But that is an impossibility of course."

"Nothing is impossible. Who are the vast majority of gum-chewers?" She looked at him quizzically.

"Women," answered Philip promptly.

"I thought so. Do you know any concern outside the trust who have any business at all?"

"There's one owned by a fellow I know named Frank Stanton."

"Good. Are you afraid of publicity, Philip."

"I wouldn't admit it to a soul in the world but you, Mary," said Philip, "but mother's conversational efforts have been classic for many years both in America and Europe."

Mary smiled. She had heard of a few.

"Philip, there are three things the several million working-girls in this country can't do without. They are chewing-gum, romance and bargains. Call up your friend Mr. Stanton and make an engagement for me to meet him at his office to-morrow. I think we can force your father to like us."

Philip laughed.

"Fine chance," he commented, "but I'll make the engagement for you."

Which he did over the telephone at once.

Again Mary's strange gray eyes looked dreamily out of the window for a while, then fixed themselves again upon the text of the story she had been reading. Philip, hanging up the receiver, came over behind her, gave her a kiss, and resumed his pipe. They were fond of being just near each other without even talking.

THE next morning at ten, Mr. Frank Stanton of the Eureka Manufacturing Company beheld a tall girl with wonderful gray eyes walk through the folding doors of his private office and stand before him.

"I am Mrs. Philip Barnett," she said, "and I have a little plan for your consideration."

She noticed with relief that Stanton was young, with the alert eyes and firm mouth of a man who appreciates the value of new ideas.

When she left the office, Stanton's hair was on end, from a habit of running his hand continually through it when excited, and his eyes danced.

He picked up the telephone and called up the hotel, where Mary had asked Philip to wait for her. He had to be paged, but presently his voice came over the wire.

"Hello."

"Hello, Philip is that you?" asked Stanton with the common tautology.

"Yep," answered Philip.

"I've just been talking to your wife. I've got a big scheme on and I want you to come

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over in the morning and go on our road-force. Are you game."

"Surest thing you know."

"All right. See you at nine in the morning. Good-by."

As Philip walked out of the telephone-booth he saw Mary in the lobby of the hotel.

"Say, for Heaven's sake you didn't ask Stanton for a job for me did you?" he asked.

"Honor bright," said Mary, "I didn't. He suggested it himself when I happened to remark that you had quit the Universal."

"What's the scheme he's got up his sleeve?" asked her husband curiously.

"It's an idea or two of my own that I'm going to ask you to let be a secret, because you'll find out all about it in a little while anyway."

"All right." He looked at his watch. "Let's have lunch."

While Mary and Philip were talking in the hotel-lobby, Stanton was interviewing his chief clerk, Culver, as follows:

"Let's see, Culver, you know one of the reporters on the *Evening Chicagoan*, don't you?"

"Yes, sir. I room with Jennings, their star man."

"Good. Philip Barnett, the son of old Barnett, head of the trust, is going to work for us on the road to-morrow. There's a crackerjack of a story in it. Tip Jennings off to it. Barnett will be here at nine. You get me?"

Culver was an efficient young man destined for future great success.

"Yes, sir."

"Nice little favor for him, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Culver."

"Yes, sir?"

"Call up the Star Bill-Posting Company and tell them to send their best man over here at once."

"Yes, sir."

"And Culver——"

"Yes, sir?"

"Silence is golden, Culver. . . . . What time does Jennings usually get home after his day's work."

"About half past four to get ready for dinner."

"You'd better knock off work this afternoon at four. You look as though you are a little tired."

"Thank you, sir."

IN LARGE modern offices, there are typewriting-machines, adding-machines, dictaphones, human machines and occasionally a brain. Culver was the brain on the outside of the door of Stanton's private office, and Stanton knew it. Wherefore Culver was by a remarkable margin the best-paid man in the employ of the Eureka Manufacturing Company.

It was one of Stanton's favorite sayings that the best investment a business man can make is in brains. In proof of the value of his idea, he was the only man in the country who stood out successfully against John Barnett.

That evening Culver explained the situation to Jennings so clearly that that gentleman, in a fever of apprehension lest some other paper should get the news first, made a note to be at the offices of the Eureka Company the first thing in the morning.

A marriage between a scion of the mighty Barnett family with a chorus-girl is nothing to be despised by any reporter whose income depends on his ability to supply a hungry demand for sensationalism, and the further development of the young man going into a rival concern in an attempt to "get even with father" by means of taking business away from him, was as myrrh and aloes in the nostrils of his nose-for-news.

Jennings was at the offices of the company before they opened. He entered with the incoming stream of stenographers and clerks and waited patiently on a bench by the telephone switchboard till the girl indicated that a clean-cut young man just entering was the man he was waiting for.

Jennings immediately walked up to the new arrival, and in his most honeyed pre-interview tone, asked:

"Pardon me, are you not Mr. Barnett?"

"Yes," said Philip.

"I am Jennings of the *Chicagoan*. I understand that you are married——"

"We won't discuss that here," said Philip. "Come into Mr. Stanton's office with me."

Jennings followed into Stanton's office, where the latter sat complacently awaiting them.

Philip entered and closed the door. Jennings helped himself calmly to a seat without waiting for the formality of being asked to take one, and lit a cigarette.

"Did you have this man waiting for me?" asked Philip.

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"No," said Stanton, "who is he?"

"Jennings of the *Chicagoan*," interrupted Jennings.

"Oh, I see."

Stanton looked thoughtful.

"I didn't tell him to come here, Philip. But, since he's here, you might as well let him interview you."

Philip suddenly thought of Mary's question as to his feelings on the subject of publicity, and a slight qualm struck him. It occured to him that to an ex-chorus-girl publicity was merely a detail of every-day business.

"Go ahead" he said suddenly. "I'll answer your questions."

Stanton leaned back in his chair and placed the fingers of one hand delicately against the fingers of the other.

Jennings blew a ring of blue smoke and sat up in his seat.

"You had some trouble with your father —er—regarding this marriage, did you not, Mr. Barnett?"

"Yes."

"What was the exact cause of the quarrel, Mr. Barnett?"

Philip bit his lip. To his wife, publicity was the biggest part of a business-deal. To him it had always been unpleasant. But he thought of the gray eyes and remembered his promise the night before to help on her secret plan to force John Barnett to welcome them home.

"Because he refused to accept a girl who had been in a musical-comedy chorus as his daughter-in-law."

A ripple of joy stirred the surface of the reporter's soul.

"May I ask what was your wife's maiden name?"

"Mary Heath."

"She was known as Lily LaRue on the stage," interrupted Stanton carelessly.

"At what theater?"

"Oh, I say——" Philip began to expostulate, realizing what he was getting into.

"The King of Joyland Company at the Polonaise," interrupted Stanton suavely.

"I don't like this, Stanton," said Philip, crimson, eying Jennings's rapidly moving pencil as it raced along the back of an envelope.

"What's the matter?"

"Why, having one's family-affairs——"

"Piffle!" said Stanton, "this is business, Philip. Remember you're just out of school only a very, very few months!"

That was the one argument that Philip couldn't answer.

Stanton began to talk,

"Mr. Barnett and I have formulated a plan whereby John Barnett will be forced—forced, I say—either into bankruptcy or to receive his son and charming daughter-in-law back to his heart. John Barnett is a hard man."

Stanton eyed Jennings, who frantically searched through his pockets for another scrap of paper and finally grabbed a sheet of stationery off Stanton's desk.

"There is only one way to reach him. That is to beat him to the wall and make him squeal for mercy."

With great dramatic sense, Stanton ground the last phrase through his clenched teeth.

"How are you going to do it?" asked Jennings.

Stanton looked him in the eye for half a minute.

"It's a funny thing for a man who is supposed to be hard-headed and practical to say," he replied, "but we're going to appeal to the gum-chewing young women of the country to stand by us in a Crusade for Love by refusing to chew any more of John Barnett's chewing-gum!"

With a gasp of joy Jennings jotted down this item.

"Have you photographs?" he asked.

AT THAT moment, strangely enough, Mary opened the door of the office and walked in.

"Why, how do you do, Philip," she cried, gazing for a second also at Jennings. "I didn't know you were here!"

The reporter gave one look at her, picked up his hat and excused himself. They had a photograph of Philip Barnett in the morgue, he knew, and he had seen the press-agent for the Polonaise hand Williams, the city-editor of the *Chicagoan*, a picture of Lily LaRue only the day before. The editor had immediately ordered it to be made up into a two-column cut.

"What were you coming up here for?" asked Philip, hot and uncomfortable with the disappearance of the reporter, and dreading the hour when the thing would be blazoned forth on the streets.

Stanton was regarding Mary with admiration. He had told her to wait outside the

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door when she came and enter at what she might consider the psychological moment.

"Why, Mr. Stanton just sent me a note to come," answered Mary.

"Pray be seated, Mrs. Barnett," said Stanton, rising and indicating a chair. "You sit down, too, Philip. I have something to say to both of you.

"In one hour and a half the train leaves for Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Here's a check for five hundred dollars for services to date. Go up there and take a honeymoon for yourselves till I tell you to come back. I will forward your commissions as soon as the sales come in——"

"But how am I going to make any sales? I thought I was to go on the road for you," cried Philip.

"You are. You have already done about six months' or ten years' worth of road-work, I don't exactly know which, and you're going to do some more in spirit. But in the body I want you and your wife to be in Oconomowoc. I'm paying you to obey orders."

"All right," said Philip.

Stanton handed him a certified check for five hundred dollars.

"What does all this mean, Mary?" he asked when they were outside.

"Never mind, dear," she said.

By the time they were half-way to Milwaukee together in the parlor-car, he had completely forgotten everything except Mary's brown hair and gray eyes.

BACK in Chicago, Stanton sat in the center of a storm of publicity which broke loose like the Johnstown Flood.

On the front page of the *Evening Chicagoan* (circulation over half a million copies a day) appeared a huge head in flaring crimson:

CHEWING-GUM KING DISOWNS SHOW-GIRL DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Beneath were pictures of Philip and Mary side by side, with masquerading Cupids lingering in ribbons round the edges, and a large black subhead to the effect that Philip had gone into a rival concern to appeal to the sentiment of the working-girls of the country to stop buying the trust's chewing-gum, and thereby force John Barnett to receive again his son and his ex-chorus-girl wife whom the enraptured Jennings had described as "the most charming and gracefully sweet young girl imaginable. She had been a great favorite with the other people in the King of Joyland Company while with it, and the manager was disconsolate because she had left, as he had planned to star her the coming year."

The *Chicagoan* had been on the streets ten minutes with this stirring appeal to the hearts of womankind, the A. P. was just beginning to flash the news on its myriad wires to the tens upon thousands of towns where the great American chewing-gum had followed the flag to the utmost outpost of the territories of the republic and Stanton had just finished the "lead" of Jennings' story when a solid flying wedge of reporters and photographers, perspiring and writhing under the lash of their respective city-editors' tongues, burst through the outer offices of the Eureka Manufacturing Company's offices and into the private office of the astute Stanton.

Like the glacier regiments of the North, they melted into an uncertain crowd of young men before the unexpectedly beaming warmth of his smile.

"What appears to be the excitement, boys?" he asked.

He had hidden his copy of the *Chicagoan* under the desk.

"Where is Mr. Barnett?" came the chorus.

"He left town this morning."

"Where to?"

"I don't know. It appeared that he and his wife learned that one of the newspapers had gotten wind of a rather private affair and insisted on publishing it. They left town to avoid the publicity."

"So he *is* married!" exulted one of the newspaper men.

"Confound it!" Stanton looked annoyed.

The reporters laughed merrily.

Culver stepped to the door.

"Here's a telegram from Mr. and Mrs. Barnett at Oconomowoc, Mr. Stanton," said he.

"—— it! Close the door and get out of here!" roared Stanton.

Culver retired precipitately.

The laugh of the reporters rose to a merry peal.

"Good-by, Mr. Stanton," they cried in unison, and streaked off for the Union Depot and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul train as fast as they could go.

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Stanton sat in his chair and laughed while Culver, outside, grinned appreciatively over a ledger.

While managing-editors were being frantically sued for expense-checks to carry the war into Oconomowoc, another army of the minions of Chicago's free and noisy press caught John Barnett as he had just finished luncheon and was entering the office-building where his offices were located.

One of them strode forward while a half a dozen cameras were pointed at him and duly snapped.

"What is your objection to a chorus-girl as a daughter-in-law, Mr. Barnett?"

John Barnett answered not a word but, raising his cane smashed a camera to bits, and strode through the startled crowd. Reaching an elevator he was whirled upward. Entering his offices, he scowled at his employees and retired to his sanctum, where he pulled his recently purchased copy of the *Chicagoan* from his pocket, and, purple-faced, read the head-lines.

The telephone rang. It was his wife.

"John!" came a tearful voice, "what is all this I hear about Philip marrying a chorus-girl without coming to see me, and you refusing to have anything to do with him? Why didn't he come to see me?"

"Because I refused to allow him to enter the house!"

He banged the receiver back on the hook.

The reporters, who had tried to interview him, condoling with the raging photographer who had had his precious camera shattered, raced back to their several offices and took revenge.

The late editions held him up before two and a half million people as the meanest old scoundrel who ever tried to wrench two loving hearts asunder.

MADLY chewing their gum, shop-girls, stenographers, lady manicures, dress-models, in fact all women who indulge in the world-renowned American adaptation of the Polynesian betel-nut habit, read the appeals to their love for love in paper after paper.

"Gee, what a handsome man!" they cried at Philip's picture, and the gum in their mouths became as wormwood to their romance-loving souls. In small city, town, village and hamlet, the busy mails, the humming wires and street-corner chatter carried the news of the crusty mean old thing who turned out his son and pretty daughter-in-law because she was a chorus-girl.

The universal feminine love for a lover was touched. In three days, sales for chewing-gum fell off till maddened commission-merchants bombarded John Barnett with letters and telegrams begging him to take his chorus-girl daughter-in-law to his bosom.

Infuriated he read them. Reports from his salesmen all over the country reported steadily decreasing business. The trust's factory warehouses became filled with aromatic, unloved gum.

In four days, of the twenty typists and stenographers which the trust employed at its general offices in Chicago, whose jaws had erst kept rhythmic time to the click and clatter of their typewriters, the teeth of not one moved in gummy harmony. John Barnett noticed it on a nervous walk through the outer offices. With a muffled curse he returned to his desk and plumped himself down before it.

"Women must chew gum," he muttered to himself. "This has lasted four days now. By the time the week is up they'll be sick of this sentimental rot that keeps them from their gum!"

Pondering that reassuring thought, he ordered his limousine and descended to it, directing the chauffeur home.

As the big car turned into Michigan Avenue, a huge poster on an unfinished sky-scraper caught his eye. With a gasp he ordered the man to stop the car at the curb in front of it, and sitting in the tonneau, perused the following:

GIRLS!!!

Old John Barnett, who thinks a Working-Girl is not good enough to be his Daughter-in-Law, thinks that YOU CAN'T KEEP FROM CHEWING GUM, and that he will beat Philip and Mary yet and force you to chew his gum so that their attempt at a reconciliation will fail.

HE IS A GOOD MAN FOR THE HEAD OF THE CHEWING-GUM TRUST!

He is making from the Gum he has been selling you from two to THREE HUNDRED PER CENT. PROFIT on every package sold. He would sacrifice his own Son and that Son's love for a Charming and Worthy Girl for the sake of wringing money from you. He has a soul that is nothing but a dollar-mark.

Because we appreciate the true fineness of you who have helped these TWO YOUNG SWEETHEARTS IN THEIR TROUBLE, we have made for you something which is infinitely better than the chewing-gum made by the trust, of which you can get TWICE AS MUCH FOR THE SAME AMOUNT OF MONEY, and in each package of which you will find a BEAUTIFUL

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PICTURE of a famous stage-favorite, either man or woman.

Try ten sticks of "WINTERSWEET" instead of five sticks of inferior gum for a nickel. Its flavor is as sweet as the love which suggested the idea that gave it birth. Remember, TEN STICKS OF "WINTERSWEET" FOR A NICKEL. The finest gum America ever chewed—chieftain of chicle and PRINCE OF CHEWING-GUMS.

TRY IT!!!!!

THE EUREKA MANUFACTURING COMPANY

sole manufacturers of

"WINTERSWEET"

The third and most lasting passion of woman had been appealed to at the psychological moment—a bargain! Even while John Barnett sat pop-eyed in his automobile reading the *mene, mene, tekel upharsin* of his doom upon the incomplete sky-scraper, in every village, town and city in the United States, gum-starved women were rushing into the stores for the precious Wintersweet, impelled by the irresistible bargain, by the long-starved appetite for gum and the determination to remain one with them who warred for love.

In every hamlet in the country those great posters had been plastered that afternoon. Like the banners and gonfalons of an army of conquest, their blue and crimson letters led the Eureka Manufacturing Company's sweating salesmen to victory against the fast-receding tide of swearing drummers for the trust.

In Oconomowoc, Philip and Mary read one as they lay besieged in their bungalow by the press. It had been plastered on a barn on a hill near them. They read it through a field-glass, with dubious amusement.

The lonely plainsman returning from the day's round-up saw it blazing at him through the dusk on shed and fence. The tired shop-girl saw it and spent her hard-earned nickel for the ten precious sticks. The chorus-lady nipped its fragrant surface with her white teeth and gazed upon the picture of the star she envied that had been wrapped in it, while a smile of rapt enjoyment spread through her rouge and powder. It was the greatest gum there was! Cupid had brewed it from a golden kettle on Hymettus.

With an oath that shattered the air, John Barnett ordered his chauffeur to drive ahead. As he reached his front steps, he noticed that the slave of the motor was chewing gum.

"What are you chewing, Arthur?" he asked grimly.

"It's a new gum, Mr. Barnett," replied the slave grinning. "You get ten sticks for a nickel instead of five and it's the best I ever tasted. My girl, Mamie, what works at the Boston Store gave me some. Would you like a stick? They call it 'Wintersweet.'"

With the roar of a wounded lion John Barnett turned and fled up the stairs of his home, and that evening a great hush lay over that house, for the lord of it was exceeding wroth.

IN THE offices of the Eureka Manufacturing Company, Frank Stanton sat with a huge cigar between his lips and a stack of ever-increasing orders for thousands of boxes of Wintersweet before him. Woman, high-priestess of Romance, was calling for her gum. The wires were hot between his office and that of the feverish superintendent of the Eureka's factory, where foremen were frantically trying to supply a sudden demand for their product from some fifty million women.

Romance the intangible, coached by the able Stanton, had been hurled into the ring against Mammon and had routed it in the first round.

Check after check went to the astounded Philip in the bungalow at Oconomowoc, while the papers yelled and shrieked with laughter over the wringing of old John Barnett's withers and the smashing of the trust.

Senators turned from discussions of re-election chances to the subject of chewing-gum. An Italian historian wrote an article for Mr. Hearst describing a parallel situation in Ancient Rome. In the midst of it, the first of the trust's long string of factories gave a last gasp and closed down. Wintersweet had become a national affair, like turkey and cranberry-sauce or clean-shaven chins. It was literally in everybody's mouth.

Then the board of directors, collected from clustering villas on the Adriatic, snug homes in California, hunting-lodges in the North, tropical palms on dreaming oceans and gorgeous suites in luxurious hotels, held a meeting and haled the president of the trust before it.

The argument was short. The chairman arose and, addressing the president, said:

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"John, you've got to telegraph your son and daughter-in-law to come home, then call up the Eureka and accept their terms."

"I won't," said John Barnett.

Directors shifted in their seats and looked intently at the surface of the long table before them.

"John Barnett——" the Chairman used his name by license of a lifelong acquaintanceship— "there's one thing in the world that you can't overcome. That's woman's love for romantic melodrama. Another is the fact that the Eureka is making the best chewing-gum, by a secret process, that has ever been made, and a third is that a bargain is a bargain. You will either make your best terms with the Eureka and send for your son and daughter or else send in your resignation."

And he sat down.

John Barnett turned pale. The knife of broken pride was no more painful than the thought of giving up the position of power which a life of patient and painstaking devotion to the sale of chewing-gum had given him.

Slowly he arose.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I will obey your instructions."

He walked to his private office, called up Stanton and bought the Eureka for ten million dollars.

Then he sat down and telegraphed, after this wise:

PHILIP AND MARY BARNETT,
OCONOMOWOC, WIS.:
Please come home. I want you where I can watch you. FATHER.

José, Dreamer of Dreams

by Ledward Rawlinson

FAIR indeed were the Sisters Robilliard. Florita was a dancer, half-butterfly, half-hummingbird, a dream of loveliness and grace, with big languorous eyes, rose-red lips and the most delicate Autumn-tinted skin in all South America. To see her face was a glimpse into Paradise, a sip from a bottle of rare vintage, a free-lunch portion of the food that fructifies the soul. To see her dance in a red-spangled dress with a gold-embroidered shawl wrapped tightly round her slim body, with its tasseled fringe flung haughtily over her left shoulder, was never to forget. She made an imported Russian ballet look like a bunch of long-legged schoolgirls hopping round a May-pole. And her ankles! *Madre mia!*

Juanita sang, sang like an archangel after an eon of practice in celestial concert-halls. She was a trifle stouter than her sister, but quite as pretty, with the same passionate

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eyes, the same velvety skin, the same provoking lips.

The mother of the girls hailed originally from fair Seville, but she died on the day that they were born, died that they might live. Papa was alive though, and in full possession of all of his faculties. The old cinnamon-colored ogre, naturally hideous but rendered uglier still by disease and drink, clung to the skirts of his daughters as a hungry dog to a bone, traveling with them wheresoever they went. His greatest effort was to collect the money that they earned in the cafés and theaters of Bolivia, which money he promptly spent on *chicha* or *pisco*. He was a worthless, dissolute creature, as devoid of morals as a wolf.

But the story can not proceed until you have met José Roca, little brown-faced, bright-eyed José, care-free, impudent, happy; a player of tunes, a dreamer of dreams. Oh, that you might have seen this chubby little cupid in his loose, ill-fitting clothes and his shiny rubber collar and his long black hair tucked under his ancient straw hat!

Wherever the Sisters Robilliard were seen, there also was José, coaxing sweet music from his old guitar and feasting his smiling eyes on the one as she danced or on the other as she sang. He was their slave, their ever-willing servant, devoted as no brother ever was, faithful as no friend could be. And they loved him dearly, for he was always by their side.

With them he traveled in stage-coaches, on muleback, afoot, but no matter whether times were good or times were bad, he was always the same light-hearted, sunshiny, big-hearted boy of twenty, ready on all occasions to carry the burden, to walk when others rode, to go hungry when others fed, and, best of all, to avenge the maudlin insult even to the knife.

Apart from his board, which the old man grudgingly paid, never a cent of salary did José receive, but he was young and he was happy and the world was at his feet. Where he came from no one knew. Though many the question asked, he always replied:

"My country lies down in a valley. Some day I go there—perhaps."

Had you enjoyed the confidence of the music-maker, he might have told you that he was wealthy, quite wealthy. Next his skin, in a little knitted sack attached to a string about his neck, was the sum of one thousand pesos. This money he had won in the Lima lottery, and he was hoarding it for no other purpose than to divide between the girls when they should marry, for he loved them better than life itself. Time was when he walked o' nights with the angels, searching his very soul to ascertain which of the sisters he would choose for a wife.

It was all in vain. They were both beautiful, both cast on the same never-to-be-duplicated die. The judgment forced upon Paris was no greater than that forced upon José. But slowly, surely, there came upon the little musician the realization that he might just as well hope to secure a star from the skies above as one of these stars of the earth, and his heart grew sad within him. In every city, town and village, the beautiful girls received countless offers of marriage.

They did not take a husband, no; but that was because they were capricious and fickle and hard to please. The life they led had made it so. Some day, however, two men would come along and steal their hearts, then would José tender his wedding-gift, throw his guitar into the river and go away, far away, over the Cordilleras.

In the meantime he prayed oft and long that this might not happen for years and years and years, so that he might continue to enjoy the exhilarating pleasure of association with them.

THE days slipped by, the weeks elapsed. One night in the Café Internationale at La Buena, the timid cavalier chanced to hear a very significant remark that set him to thinking deeply. The two sisters, in their short-skirted, spangled dresses, were idling away the time during an interval in their performance by drinking the juice of the lime and listening to the flatteries of a group of underpaid Government-clerks.

Suddenly Juanita turned to one of the men and, with an entrancing smile, said:

"Of course I'll marry you—if you've got fifty thousand pesos. I'll marry any man who has money."

It was the joking answer to a joking question, but José did not take it so. Fifty thousand pesos. Fifty thousand pesos. The words kept ringing in his ears. Perhaps if he had fifty thousand pesos, one of the girls would marry him. Ah, it was good to

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think about! He clasped his hands in ecstacy. A smile played about his lips. But on sober thought the hopelessness of the task of securing so large an amount of money rose up before him. That was a fortune, something——

Like a flash he remembered the stories which he had repeatedly heard in the past of fabulous sums of money in the shape of gold plate and or aments that lay buried in the ruins of the Temple to the Sun at Tiahuanacu, where the Incas were alleged to have deposited their valuables to save them from falling into the hands of those freebooters of old, the Spanish *conquistadores*.

Every once in a while a traveler appeared in La Buena with a gold ingot or a piece of jewelry that he had bought for a mere trifle from some Indian at Tiahuanacu, but no one had ever succeeded in finding out just where the precious metal was obtained. Wealth beyond the dreams of avarice was believed to be in the hands of the dirty, ragged, ever-mysterious Aymaras, and many were the thrilling tales that were told of wonderful mountain-caverns in which the priceless relics of the past were stores.

Buried treasure! What a fascination there was in the words. How romantic it would be to hunt buried treasure for the sake of a beautiful señorita. He decided to start as early as possible. The discovery of the lost gold would make him rich enough to be able to marry either Florita or Juanita and to give her all the pretty dresses and jewelry she desired. His heart beat high with anticipation.

That was a long, long night. José thought the café would never close, but eventually to his great relief it did, and he performed the last duty of the day—that of seeing his fair charges safely home for the night. On the way, the girls bantered him good-naturedly over the anxious, restless air that had come upon him, accusing him of having lost his heart to some wealthy señorita, but the little musician merely smiled and shook his head.

Next morning, he went to work in a wonderfully businesslike manner. With the money from the bag about his neck he laid in a stock of dried salt fish, beef, beans, picks, shovels and other necessities of life. Then he purchased a murderous revolver with which to guard the gold when he had found it, and lastly a couple of mules—one a prancing Argentino to carry the pack, the other a gentle, amiable creature of the name of Mercedes for his own conveyance.

José was very fearful that he would be discovered before leaving town, but the saints were with him and the little treasure-hunting expedition started across the pampas unknown to any one. Like a wandering minstrel of old, the cavalier sat on his mule, singing the songs of Spain where only the llamas and condors could hear.

The girls would miss him, of course, but how they would welcome him when his pockets bulged with gold! He chuckled and chuckled again.

Several hours later, the expedition arrived at Tiahuanacu, a little mud-and-straw hamlet obscured by the dirt-piles that unsuccessful adventurers from all over the world had taken out of the ground when prospecting for buried treasure. Only when his mule stubbed her nose against the old cathedral-wall did José know that he had arrived. Not at all put out, the music-maker tied his animals to a ring on the door of the tottering edifice and started off on a little preliminary hunt. It was a mean, cold day. There was no sun and the clouds hung low on the mountainsides. The air was thin and piercing.

Half a mile from the village lay the remains of the Temple—great slabs of stone weighing several tons, all kinds of uncanny-looking idols, pillars, arches and everything else in the moss-incrusted line that goes with a first-class ruin as set forth in the illustrated literature of any reputable steamship-company. The landscape for miles around had been tunneled and bored by fortune-hunters until it closely resembled a miniature reproduction of Culebra Cut.

II

AS JOSÉ wandered through the deserted halls of the Incas and gazed with solemn, searching eyes upon the remnants of a perished civilization, he suddenly heard the sound of sandals, and a moment later a man approached on two legs. He was a dirty, ragged old man of the Indian variety, stoop-shouldered, mildewed and palsied and, judging by the wrinkles and furrows in his chicory-colored face, he belonged to prehispanic if not prehistoric times.

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From his rags this old pelican of the pampas drew out a little gold god about an inch high. If José had not shut tight his mouth, his heart would have been wobbling about on the ground. He had a clue, and if ever you have tried to find anything, you will know that a clue is a very important feature. Forget your gun if you will, forget the finger-prints in the mud or the foot-prints on the window-pane, but never the clue. Hold on to it as you would to your wife's private fortune if she had one.

By a great effort the amateur sleuth concealed his elation and agitation. Violating all the rules of his caste, he gathered a few sticks, built a fire and invited the stranger to sit down. The invitation was promptly accepted. For a moment there was silence, then in the cheerful warmth of the crackling sticks the two made a covenant of friendship together.

"Francisco Pizarro," said José familiarly, "I'm glad you called. You belong to an old and well-respected tribe of bandits, and so do I. We can do business, I feel sure. The sample you have in your hand is just what I want, only I don't handle bullion retail. Tell me where you keep the rest of the loot and I will personally see that you never know the want of a chew of *coca* or a drink of *pisco* as long as you live."

For a time the ancient and wizened creature sat blinking his eyes and muttering inaudible things. Then he searched among his rags and eventually fished out a bamboo flute on which he began to exhibit his proficiency, pouring forth the impassioned strains of that heart-rending song which has stirred the bosom of civilized and uncivilized nations alike, to wit—"Do, ray, me, fah, sol, la, see, do."

José applauded loudly, but after half an hour he grew a little tired of the melody, so he opened up a Conservatory of Music of his own by caroling an old Spanish ditty entitled "There's a business that never was busted." This *Saengerfest* continued for another half-hour, then peace was declared and the delegates resumed the business of the day.

"Let me see, where did we leave off?" said José with a glorious smile. "Oh, I know. You were just telling me where——"

"*Ineewa*," mumbled Pizarro with a grin that showed his hideous, coca-discolored teeth.

José folded his arms.

"Indian," said he, "I know not of what you speak. But allow me to explain that I am a man of few sentences, and I must find the safety-deposit vaults of the Incas before it gets dark. Lead me to the hidden grotto at once, or I'll tell Saint Peter."

"*Ineewa*," muttered Pizarro.

José's face grew very stern. He decided to adopt new tactics.

"That won't go with me," he declared. "Let me tell you one thing. I'm going to get this information, if I have to use a stomach-pump. Therefore, if you wish to avoid a sudden and untimely end, you will tell me *pronto* where your descendants kept their gold."

It was all to no purpose. José argued, pleaded, threatened, gesticulated, articulated and vociferated, and still the old man refused to unload. Whenever he did deign to speak a syllable or two he did so in Aymara, which is a jargon that you bite off in chunks, like Chinese.

José was considerably provoked. Of a sudden a brilliant idea entered his head. He decided to kidnap the veteran, carry him off to the mountains and keep him away from his relatives and friends until he had divulged the secrets of the ages.

It was a great scheme. The very thought of it made him howl. Without a moment's delay, the treasure-hunter got out the bottle of *aguadiente* that he had procured for medicinal and other reasons and handed it to Pizarro. In less than an hour the old gentleman was lying on his back on the hard, brown earth, kicking his legs in the air and roaring away at the Aymara equivalent of "We won't get home till morning."

The W. C. T. U. wouldn't stand a ghost of a chance down in Bolivia.

Convulsed with laughter, José returned to the village for his live stock, following which he strapped Pizarro across the back of the saddle-mule and directed the course of the expedition to the mountains.

How he played and sang as he trudged the barren pampas! The very angels must have heard his merry lays that afternoon, for the sun broke through the frowning clouds and bathed the land in glory.

JUST before nightfall, the musician came upon a deserted dobie hut, and here he decided to camp until his guest had disgorged the information desired. For two long days and two long

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nights the Indian lay in a comatose condition, but on the morning of the third day he opened his eyes, smiled, and by signs and motions intimated that he desired another instalment of *aguadiente*.

"No, señor," said the youth. "The celebration is over for the present and the bartender's gone on his vacation. Tell me where the gold is and I'll give you enough *aguadiente* to last you five hundred years."

But Pizarro shook his head and sat blinking his eyes like a feeble old parrot. All morning José coaxed and cajoled without result, so about noon he started a little dirty work at the crossroads by giving his victim a huge slab of salt fish. This the Indian tore to pieces like a cormorant, then ordered the musician to bring him a glass of water, but José shook his head and smiled in his own roguish way. Francisco did not seem to care very much one way or the other. He mumbled a little, rolled over on to the mud floor and went to sleep as if he hadn't a care in the world. Next morning he woke in time for breakfast, and again the merciless conspirator handed him a portion of well-salted fish large enough to keep a Lascar sailor alive for forty days and forty nights.

This also disappeared very rapidly. Yet again Pizarro asked for water; yet again his request was refused. He begged hard this time, stretching out his thin bony hands in supplication. It was difficult indeed for José to continue the torture, but whenever he weakened there rose before him two beautiful visions—one of a singer, the other of a dancer, and his heart hardened in spite of himself.

Love is a terrible thing. After two more days of suffering, Pizarro was a pitiable sight, for his thirst had assumed camel-like proportions. His tongue was parched and swollen and his eyes rolled weakly in his head.

"Señor," he mumbled, "there is no Inca gold!"

"You're a *mentiroso*," said José deferentially. "I've lived on these pampas too long to believe that. A man of your age with nine toes in the grave has no business to prevaricate so. Shame on you! Moreover, don't you ever stop to consider that you're somewhat of an *ingrato?* Here I board you for three days and put you up at my club, and yet you refuse to give me a little information."

That Indian had no sense of honor at all. Nothing would induce him to tell what he knew. José was wild as an enraged moose, and inasmuch as the fish had now all disappeared, he was compelled to change his methods. Wherefore he gave an imitation of a Potosi Indian executing a war-dance. Seizing his revolver, he danced about the room like a Hindu priest on a bed of red-hot charcoal, making fearful grimaces and waving his arms and legs in the air. To be more realistic still, he uttered the most awful, blood-freezing shrieks, disarranged his coiffure and shot the roof full of holes.

Of course Pizarro should have been scared to death, but somehow he was not. He seemed to look upon the thing in the light of a cabaret-performance. After a while he got out his bamboo flute and accompanied the dancing dervish as strongly as his weakened condition would permit.

José was furious. Things were going from bad to rotten. He expressed himself very frankly, and made preparations to depart before his temper mastered him and murder resulted. When he went out to the corral, however, he made a discovery. His mules had been stolen.

What he said then may not be interpreted into English. Wild with rage, he lifted his arms in the air and swore, actually swore, using words that must have made the man who invented the Spanish language wriggle and squirm in his grave.

José was very unhappy; the faces of the beautiful sisters haunted and beckoned him, but he could not come. Bowed with grief, and bathed in the damp and chilly sweat of anguish, he set out on foot for Tiahuanacu, his guitar slung unhappily across his back. The fifty thousand pesos seemed very far away now, and the journey across the pampas was long and wearisome, but just as darkness came on he reached his destination, half frozen by the piercing wind.

Uninvited he crawled into an Indian hut—there was no hotel in the place—and here in the company of several men, women, babies, pigs, poultry and dogs, he was given a night's lodging in return for a little song. Next morning, after thanking his hosts and hostesses for their hospitality, he crawled out of the hut and partook of a little *al fresco* meal of hard dry bread in the local Delmonico's. Of course there was meat on the bill of fare, but the *pièce de résistance* happened to be stewed rat, an Aymara

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delicacy that José resisted without difficulty.

AN HOUR passed. As the unhappy musician wandered through the village pondering over the uncertainties of life and women, he accidentally overheard two solemn-looking Indians talking in Spanish. Their copper-bronze faces bore every mark of suppressed excitement, and their voices were subdued. One of the men had a heavy burden on his back, as if setting out on a long journey, and to him the other finally said:

"Be very careful, *hermano*. Let no man see you when you do it."

That was enough for José Roca. He could scent a clue like a bloodhound or a Boy Scout. Quickly he made up his mind to follow the traveler to his journey's end, no matter how distant that end might be. At a never-halting, merciless, jog-trot of a pace the Indian led him far over the wide-stretching pampas, past silent towns with white-domed churches, across snow-capped ranges, and over crude bridges that spanned mighty rivers.

Seven miles this side of sundown, the travelers arrived at the outskirts of a little town that nestled on the mountainside and José, tired and footsore and coated with dust, resolved to learn the Indian's destination before going farther. The man acted as if on a walking-tour round the world.

"Little wanderer," said the youth, catching up with his pacer, "whither goest thou?"

The Indian looked wonderingly at his questioner but spake not.

"Don't you understand your own language?" said José with a grin. "Where are you going and what do you intend to do when you get there?"

The Indian declined to be interviewed, and Jose, to his regret, realized that violence was necessary once again. For a few moments the two walked together in silence, like man and wife. Presently they came to an old well, attached to which was a pump and an ancient stone bath about four feet square and six feet deep, a relic of the good old days when the use of soap and water was a popular pastime in some parts of Bolivia. Lying close by was a copper scoop which at one time had been used as a dipper. Instantly the music-maker received another inspiration. He seized the Indian by the neck and, in a voice full of authority and truculence, he commanded the man to be seated.

The request was immediately complied with, for Bolivian Indians from the cradle are made to look upon subjection as their natural lot. Instinctively they obey an order, no matter whence it comes.

Taking a stout piece of cord from his pocket, José next bound the astounded Aymara's feet together and by a herculean effort lowered him by the shoulders into the bath. The poor Indian stood gazing apathetically about him, evidently wondering whether he was about to be buried alive or just what kind of a personal calamity was pending. Only too soon he learned the dreadful truth. José seized the pump-handle and commenced to work it vigorously up and down, pouring a steady stream of ice-cold water upon the unwilling recruit to the cold-plunge cult. To his eternal credit, however, the Indian never flinched. He was schooled to affliction and harsh treatment.

When the water had reached the neck of his victim, the youth handed him the dipper with instructions to bale as fast as he could if he would save his soul alive. This the Indian did, and for half an hour he worked frantically to keep pace with José's merciless pumping. It was a villainous procedure, worthy of the artists of the Inquisition. At last the poor devil in the bath showed signs of weakening, and finally he gave in.

Immediately the music-maker ceased firing.

"Tell me where I can find the lost gold of the Incas," he demanded.

"I do not know, señor," muttered the shivering Indian.

José put his hand to the pump-handle again and struck a fierce, threatening attitude.

"Then where are you going?"

The Aymara cast a hurried, furtive glance about him.

"I am going to murder a man if I can find him," said he. "The thief stole one of my best llamas!"

José turned his back and completely exhausted the resources of his native tongue, invoking upon the whole Indian race an unspeakable end upon the burning ghats of Hades. Inarticulate and streaming with perspiration, he stood mopping his brow.

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III

A FEW moments so, then he unwillingly hauled the Indian from the bath, cut the bonds from his feet and went off in search of shelter for the night. This he secured in the Hotel de los Angeles, a newly-erected inn of mud and bamboo with all modern conveniences excepting baths, wash-basins, towels, soap, table-cloths and individual bedrooms. Discomfited and heart-sick, he went supperless to bed, the bed being a blanket on the floor.

Next morning as he sat in the kitchen taking his chocolate and roll, he became involved in conversation with the *prefecto* of the district, a polite old Indian, brown as a coffee-berry and fat as a butcher. Cautiously José brought up the burning question of the lost gold of the Incas, whereupon the *prefecto* shook his big head and smiled from ear to ear.

"The little gold things that the Aymaras sell are made in Callacoya," said he, soaking his roll in his steaming chocolate. "They sell them very cheap because they themselves get the gold from the river, melt it and work it into articles for sale. Few real Inca relics have ever been found. The only one I know of to-day is here in Villa Bella on the altar of the cathedral. It is a chalice of gold."

José's face dropped until it almost reached his waist-line.

"How much is the chalice worth?" he asked, dejectedly stroking the stubble that had gathered on his cheeks.

"Fifty thousand pesos," said the *prefecto* proudly. "It is set with many precious stones. Señor Patero, the wealthy copper-miner, has offered to buy it on many occasions, but the chalice is not for sale. He would like to get it very much."

José put his hand to his fluttering heart and bade it lie down. Fifty thousand pesos. . . . . Fifty thousand pesos. The words rang in his ears till they made them ache. He saw once more the faces of the Sisters Robilliard, and the old, old longing came back to his heart as never before. He was homesick, love-sick, heart-sick. He wondered how they were getting along without his music; whether they ever spared him a passing thought.

Fifty thousand pesos! Fifty thousand pesos! The Tempter was at work.

Excusing himself to the *prefecto*, José left his breakfast and went immediately to the cathedral, an old adobe structure, green with the moss of ages. Inside, on the altar stood the golden glorious vessel. About nine inches high and wondrously carved, the chalice shone and glistened in the dim light of the interior of the cathedral like a beacon through the night. And it was valued at exactly fifty thousand pesos!

For a long time José knelt among the ignorant, apathetic Cholo worshipers, wrestling with his conscience and mumbling his paternosters. It would be an awful sin to rob a cathedral, but the saints would surely forgive him when they learned that it was done for the sake of a beautiful señorita. Of course they would. Therefore with an earnest prayer upon his lips, the youth came to his feet and crept back to the hotel to await with burning impatience the setting of the sun.

At eight o'clock, when the last of the llamas had been stabled for the night, and the little town of Villa Bella was wrapped in the ghostly, starry quiet that comes only to the high Andes, José again entered the cathedral, fortified for the task before him by copious drafts of native-made liquor that drove the fear of God from his heart.

Save for a candle on each side of the chalice, the building was in darkness and empty but for one old woman crouched in the middle of the bare earth floor. An hour passed and still the woman poured out her soul in supplication. As the effect of the liquor diminished, José began to shake like a leaf in the wind. He was full of unholy fear, fighting all the while against the Tempter's urgings to remain. Presently the worshiper rose, crossed herself and passed silently out. "Now or never," whispered the Evil One.

Slowly, painfully, José crept to the altar, realizing only too well that detection would mean death at the hands of the fanatical Indians. A deadly chill fastened upon him and his heart seemed no longer to beat. His breath came in short, hard puffs. He trembled viciously. Once he thought he heard a noise. He stopped suddenly, stricken almost helpless, but nothing happened and he moved forward in a daze, an overwhelming guilt upon his soul.

At last he was on the altar-steps. Now his hand was on the sacred relic with its glowing stones and its quaint old carvings. Success was his at last. But no, the chalice

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would not move. It was screwed down!

A cry of bitter disappointment escaped his lips. He turned to go.

Facing him was the *padre* of the cathedral a short, thick-set, clean-shaven man dressed in a long black cassock. His arms were folded on his breast and there was a cold, hard look in his eyes, a mocking smile upon his lips. José drew back with an awful gasp, then stood perfectly silent, perfectly still. He knew it was all over, and an unwonted calm came upon him. It was strange, very strange. He did not seem to be afraid at all.

FOR a long moment the two faced each other in silence then, without ever a word, the *padre* came forward, took his captive firmly by the arm and led him unresisting to the street. Ten minutes later, José was in jail, sentenced to be shot at dawn.

With him in the cell was the *corregidor* of the district, an old rapacious rascal who awaited a similar fate for attempting to foment a revolution with the moneys of the republic. This man was half crazed with fear and weeping bitterly.

"Save me, save me!" he sobbed, clutching wildly at the air. "The saints will never forget the one who saves me. I am a rich man. *Tengo mucha plata.*"

But José sat in silence on the floor. He thought of Florita and Juanita and wondered whether they would ever hear of his death. He prayed that they might always be happy, that they might never know the want of food or shelter or clothing. It was hard to die so young, when life was full of promise, but there was no hope of escape. The door was of iron and very heavy, the walls a foot thick, the window barred beyond all effort.

An hour passed, an hour that was a year. Sleep being out of the question, José requested one of the half-drunken guards to bring him if possible a guitar, and this was presently done. Then from the little condemned cell came the sounds of an old, old song, "*Adios para siempre mitad de mi vida*" —the lover's farewell to his sweetheart.

Into every word, into every note, the little fellow put his heart and soul, and the tears rolled down as he sang. When the music ceased, the guards cheered lustily for more, whereupon José granted their request. Hearing this, the *comandante* of the prison, who also was in a very hilarious condition, sent for the condemned music-maker, and ere long José was sitting in the man's living-room-bedroom-office, entertaining his majesty and his majesty's servants with the bacchanalian songs of old Madrid.

There was plenty of *vino* available, and the fun was fast and furious. The more his jailers drank, the more José twanged his guitar. It was by no means easy to do this with a heavy heart, but the little cavalier applied himself to the distasteful task in the fervent hope that somehow it might open up an avenue of escape.

Two hours went by, three hours. One by one the drunken revelers dropped asleep —on the bed, on the floor, anywhere, till finally not a man remained awake. And all was still.

Trembling fearfully, José rose and crept to the door. It was unlocked. He was saved! Suddenly he remembered his fellow prisoner. For a second he hesitated, uncertain as to whether he ought to take so great a risk, but his mind was quickly made up. He crept quietly over the sleeping soldiers and down the corridor to the cell. With anxious precaution he drew the bolts and entered. The *corregidor* was on his knees, weeping and praying for mercy, almost dead from fright.

"Be quiet!" commanded José tremulously. "I think I can help you escape."

"Oh, señor, save me, save me," sobbed the man. "I am rich. I will pay you well."

José put his head out of the cell and glanced hastily up and down the corridor. The coast was clear; save for the snoring of the guards not a sound could be heard.

Together they crept out of the jail and far over the wide-stretching pampas.

IV

TWO months later, after the hue and cry had died, José again appeared in La Buena, sumptuously, flashily dressed. He wore a brand-new suit of irresistible light check, white silk shirt, flowing blue tie and shoes of eye-aching carmine. Prosperity fairly radiated from him. He had not found the lost gold of the Incas, but he was the proud possessor of fifty thousand pesos just the same, the price paid him by the grateful *corregidor* for saving his life. And José had come to claim his bride, the girls themselves to decide which she should be.

Flushed with excitement, the musician

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strolled through the cherub-decorated doors of the Café Internationale, the gay little place in which Juanita sang and Florita danced. But outside of the barefooted Indian waiters and the swarthy, derby-hatted bartender, the café was deserted and silent. José was mystified. He wondered whether the town had cast off its evil ways during his absence.

"*Muchacho,*" he called to one of the waiters, "what is the matter? Where is the crowd? *Que hay?*"

"Everybody is at the cathedral to-night, señor," said the boy. "There is something special going on."

José hesitated a moment, then stalked over to the bar and recklessly ordered an absinthe. After gulping this, he left the café and walked quickly down the gloomy street to the house where the two girls lived with their father. In response to his knock the door was opened, but by a strange Chola woman.

"I seek the Señoritas Florita and Juanita," said José, suppressing his excitement.

The Chola looked at him wonderingly.

"Señorita Juanita died four days ago," she said softly.

"Died," gasped José, drawing back and putting his hand to his side. "Of what did she die? Tell me quick."

"She was in love with a youth named José, but he ran away and broke her heart," was the reply.

José stared at the woman with wide incredulous eyes. A dizzy, sickly feeling came over him. For a time his ashen lips refused to move.

"Then I must see her sister," he stammered finally. "Where is she?"

"At the cathedral, señor."

Helpless, bewildered, full of remorse, José staggered up the narrow, cobble-stoned canyons to the Plaza de San Francisco and into the venerable house of prayer. Here he found a great crowd gathered, a crowd of soldiers, señoritas, Indians, Cholitas, young men, old men and army-officers, all on their knees in reverent attitudes. The altar was ablaze with the lights of hundreds of candles, and by it stood the archbishop, vested in full episcopal raiment, a golden crozier on his head, a jeweled crucifix in his hand. At his feet crouched a girl in a red satin dress, a lace mantilla draped jauntily over her hair. On each side of the altar, motionless as statues of marble, stood six black-robed nuns, their hands clasping crosses of silver, their eyes upturned to heaven.

For a few minutes the voice of the aged prelate was heard in admonition, then altar-boys seized the ends of a purple curtain and pulled it quickly together, blotting the scene from view as in a theater when the end of an act is reached. The silence was profound. Not a man or woman in that great building stirred a muscle. Every eye was gazing straight ahead, every breath hushed in expectation.

Ten minutes passed. With a suddenness that was startling, the curtain again parted. The archbishop still stood by the altar, but save for one lone candle it was now in darkness, and the figure at his feet was dressed in black. On the floor lay a red satin dress, a pair of red slippers, and a lace mantilla—discarded forever. Turning his jeweled and embroidered back on his people, the archbishop lifted up his arms and prayed aloud, a prayer that brought tears to the eyes of women and made men tremble. Then, at its conclusion the figure in black rose mechanically from the floor and faced the populace. Florita Robilliard, the beautiful dancer, had taken the veil.

José put his hand to his mouth and stifled a cry. A cold sweat broke out all over him. He turned to the man at his side.

"Why did she do this?" he demanded in a strange and broken voice.

"She was in love with a youth named José, but he ran away and broke her heart," was the reply.

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WO_2

by Maurice Drake

SYNOPSIS—James Carthew-West, well born and once third officer on a West Indies liner, has become a wastrel, cruising about the south of England in his ketch, the *Luck and Charity*, with remittance-men and 'Kiah, his silent crew. His money gone, West is deserted by all but by 'Kiah. He takes an odd job of ferrying for Leonard Ward, a quiet, capable chemist teaching in Birmingham; Miss Lavington, and a young woman named Pamela or "Pamily" Brand—quick-tongued, impudent, intelligent—who scolds Carthew-West for his shiftlessness. Carthew-West, with his ketch, is employed by Professor Ward to carry cargoes for a trading-company exporting various cargoes from England to Terneuzen, Holland. He hires as extra-hand Austin Voogdt, a London newspaper-man, who has taken to an outdoor vagabond life to cure himself of tuberculosis. The manager at Terneuzen, Willis Cheyne, always insists that they take back to England as much mud ballast as possible. The whole business mystifies Carthew-West and Voogdt, for the cargoes they carry are almost valueless commercially. Apparently Cheyne is cheating Professor Ward, yet Ward seems a most capable man. At the beginning of the Winter, Voogdt leaves the boat. West takes on a quarrelsome sailor named Rance, and sticks to the dreary Winter coasting. Manager Cheyne is surprisingly agitated by the establishment, at Terneuzen, of a rival German trading-company, managed by one Van Noppen. By now West is climbing back to his social place. He has a pleasant dinner with his four employers. Voogdt comes back. He has discovered that Professor Ward and the two girls are making big money—no one knows how, for apparently every trip of the *Luck and Charity* and the other two schooners of the trading-company has resulted in loss. Also, there seems to be no smuggling concealed in the trading. Voogdt pokes about the sheds of the rural German company and is shot at. Then a steamer tries to run down the *Luck and Charity* in the darkness.

CHAPTER XVII

CHEYNE IS FRIGHTENED

VOOGDT kept his promise about going armed when next we went to sea. When he spread his purchases out upon the cabin-table, the place looked like an artillery-museum. There was a condemned Mauser rifle, its barrel drilled out smooth to convert it into a cheap shotgun; a Martini; two clumsy great navy revolvers and a little Browning repeater with a clip of cartridges in its handle and a long-heeled barrel that suggested some snarling beast with its ears back, as it lay across the top of the fist that held it. As for ammunition, I should think the heap of packages on the table would have filled a bucket. I laughed at the array.

"What on earth are you going to do with those things?" I asked.

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"Hurt somebody if we get any more funny business," he said grimly. "Fifteen pounds that lot's cost me, and I don't spend money like that for nothing. Happen the next boat that tries to run us down may get her paint chipped."

"Don't kill yourself or any of the rest of us, that's all," I said, and left him stowing away his weapons out of sight.

The cargo awaiting us was of pig iron this time. There were only twenty-five tons of the stuff, but neither Voogdt nor myself were moved to offer any remarks about it, only setting mechanically about the usual business of emptying and refilling the hold, our minds still full of our recent experiences.

Neither of us said anything about the matter to any outsiders, and if Rance and 'Kiah talked, they were probably disbelieved, sailors' tales not going for much in seaport towns. At all events, no reporters called on us for information, and by the time the monotonous business of loading was over, I felt rather inclined to be ashamed of the warlike preparations concealed below.

The breeze still held and, leaving Southampton on the morning tide, we reached Dungeness about two in the afternoon. The steamboat was still there, steaming round and round at half speed in a five or six mile circle, three big pilot-cutters cruising up and down to keep her company.

"We'll give them an exhibition," Voogdt said to me. "Can you shoot, Rance?"

Rance pronounced himself something wonderful as a marksman, and Voogdt fetched up a couple of empty bottles and all the contents of the armory. The weapons were handed out, the bottles thrown overboard and we woke the sandy flats of Dungeness with a noble banging. I think one bottle got away, and the other must have cost several shillings' worth of ammunition before it was sunk, but the noise and splashing of the bullets were impressive. The people on the steamer took no notice whatever of us, and we saw no more of her. But whether she feared our artillery, or whether there were too many craft about for her to have another try at us, or whether perhaps Voogdt was mistaken in her altogether, it was impossible to say. Whatever the cause, she left us alone, and we made a quick and uneventful voyage, arriving back at Terneuzen inside of four days.

The first thing we noticed was that the German settlement was in a state of great activity. No less than three barges lay at their half-built wharf, one of them sprit-sailed after the Medway pattern, and the other two clumsy Scheldt pontoons, only fit for towing. Thirty or forty laborers ashore were building a second embankment inside the first, and another cargo of deals and corrugated iron was being unloaded from the river-barges.

WHEN we reached our own wharf, Cheyne was waiting for us, cheerful as a cricket.

"Busy times down yonder," I remarked.

"They're going in for explosives," he said. "That's the factory coming ashore in pieces. They're going to put up the sheds between the two embankments."

He was very full of their business and on the best of terms with himself and all the world. "Decent chap that Van Noppen—their manager. Generally has grub with me evenings;" and he went on to describe the German company and their trade as though he were a partner.

I stole a glance at Voogdt, but his face was impassive. Whatever he thought, whatever disappointment he felt at this open disclosure, he made no sign. Here were most of his theories knocked on the head; the unusual choice of situation and the mysterious machinery all accounted for in the most commonplace manner. Thinking of his feelings at discovering such a mare's nest, I spoke to Cheyne carelessly, on the spur of the moment, and raised a storm.

"They're doing a *bona-fide* business, then?" I said, surprised.

"Yes, of course." He answered casually, and then paused. I could have bitten my tongue off as I saw him gradually realizing what my words implied.

"Of course they're doing a *bona-fide* business," he said slowly. "What the —— do you mean by saying that?"

"I didn't mean anything," I said lamely.

"Then what d'ye say it for? D'you mean to imply that we're not doing a *bona-fide* business as well? —— you! Haven't you been told off once already about that?"

I tried to wriggle out of it by assuring him I believed the Axel Trading-Company to be the soundest of concerns. But nothing would pacify him. He was scared, or had

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lost his temper, or both, and like a fool went on bullyragging me when he would better have held his tongue. At last my temper wore thin, too, and I blurted out the truth.

"Since you want to know, I reckon you're doing very fishy business," I said angrily. "I didn't mean to let it slip, and I don't mean to mention it outside. I owe some sort of duty to my employers, even while you're one of 'em. So you can reckon on my holding my tongue so long as I'm drawing your pay—and that'll be just as long as you keep civil, I tell you straight. I know these voyages don't pay, and I know you're making money. I know Ward invested ten thousand pounds in a Japanese loan recently. In fact I know a lot more than you think, and the best thing you can do is to shut your head and thank Heaven I can keep mine shut as well."

He tried to answer, but literally he couldn't speak. It was strange to watch him lick his lips and twitch about the mouth, trying to get the words out. He just mumbled something inaudible that might or might not have been an apology, and then turned on his heel and went back to his office without a word.

And when I turned to Voogdt again it was with no thoughts of any mare's nest. I'd seen Cheyne frightened before—and then by another mention of business—but nothing like this shock. It's a queer experience to slang a man, just plain straightforward abuse with no venom in it, and see it strike him doddering like a palsy.

"What d'ye make of that?" I asked Voogdt.

"Isn't he in a funk? 'Fishy business' is right, anyhow. I never saw a man look so sick. As to the Germans——" He shrugged his shoulders. "Either legitimate business in their line, or they're cleverer rogues than our lot. The explosive manufacture wheeze is a great idea—accounts for choice of position and everything else, besides keeping inquisitive strangers away."

I had to go to the office within the hour and Voogdt insisted on accompanying me.

"It's no time to play with a bear, just after you've been stirring him up with a pole," he said, so we walked up the wharf together, and he waited outside the office while I went in.

Cheyne, writing letters, looked up as I entered, and I stated my business briefly and cleared out. All through the interview neither of us said a word more than the business required; and Cheyne's manner might be described rather as cowed than merely civil. All the starch was gone out of him. You could scarcely recognize in him the cheerful, easy manager who had greeted us an hour or two before.

"He'll go on the loose," I said to Voogdt on our way back.

"Not till he's come and had another talk with you," he said. "You've frightened him too much. Is Ward here still?"

"I forgot to ask."

"Then run back and ask now. I'll wait."

I stuck my head in round the door. "Mr. Ward still here?" I said.

"He went back three days ago."

"I guessed that," Voogdt said, when I told him. "Cheyne's writing him now, reporting your conversation and asking for instructions."

"You know a lot, don't you?" I said, inclined to be skeptical.

"Ward's the controlling brain of this show. If he was in Terneuzen, Cheyne would have been up there by this time. I'll bet anything you like a code-wire meaning, 'Be on your guard,' or 'Suspicions aroused' precedes the letter."

WE HAD reached the ship and were going aboard over the sloping plank gangway, which, having been used as a platform for ballasting, was caked with mud. A little rain the night before had made it very slippery to walk on and it was necessary to tread delicately.

"You're good at guessing," I said, picking my steps with care.

"Up to a certain point," said he, putting a foot on the plank behind me. "But every time I get past these elementary questions, I stumble——" There was a scuffle and a bump, and I turned round to find him sitting on the planks. The fall had startled him. His mouth was open and he stared in a strange, set way.

"Hurt?" I asked.

"Hurt? No. . . . I stumble over something, I was going to say. And I did—I stumbled over something!"

"Well, get up, if you aren't hurt."

His face made me nervous, he looked so queer. I thought perhaps he'd injured his back.

"Are you sure you aren't hurt?"

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"No, I tell you. Of course I'm not hurt. Shut up. You worry me."

"Get up, then."

"No hurry." He slid his hands over the planks on which he sat and then looked at his muddied palms like a man stunned, or waking from a sleep. I felt sure he must be seriously injured and got back on the gangway to help him to his feet.

"Here, let me help you up."

"I'm all right," he said. "All right. All right. All right. Sound in wind and limb. Can't you understand English?"

He jumped up and ran lightly aboard. "Does that look like serious damage?" said he.

"You looked funny."

"You'll look funny when I've done with you. My sainted aunt! Jem West, I've tumbled."

"I saw you."

"You blithering precisian. Don't you know what a *double entendre* means? I stumble, I said, and I stumbled. I've tumbled, I say. In my tumble I tumbled!"

His eyes were dancing, his speech was jerky with excitement, half hysterical.

"You simple-minded, one-ideaed old thick-head!" he cried. "Let's see how much I can tell you without your comprehension. Did you see me tumble?"

"Not actually. You were behind me."

"Well, I did, didn't I? You know I've tumbled?"

"Of course I do."

"You saw me actually sitting on it, didn't you?"

"On that plank. Yes."

"On that muddy plank. That's what I mean by It. It—— See?"

"Look here," I said. "You've jolted your spine or something, and it's made you a bit silly. You go and lie down for a spell."

He literally lay down on the dirty deck and rolled, roaring with laughter. Then he got up and looked at his filthy clothes.

"And now no more of these revels," he said. "I won't deny I felt a bit hysterical for once. Now let's get about it—out cargo, in ballast—and hey for England, home and beauty!"

And not another word could I get out of him.

He worked like a demon, but his fit of silence never left him. When we got away it was just the same: a grunt for "yes" or "no," and not a word of any kind beyond. The voyage was longer than usual, to Yealmpton, in Devonshire, where the *Luck and Charity* was launched. But he made no answer to my remarks on that or any other subject, and 'Kiah and Rance were the only company I had on the voyage.

When we reached port and almost before we tied up in the Yealm river, Voogdt came on deck in his shore-clothes.

"I want a run ashore," he said.

He hadn't spoken as many words in five days.

"Are you going to desert again?"

I remembered that a fit of silence had preceded his leaving us at Guernsey.

He shook his head.

"Back to-morrow," he said, shortly. "Perhaps to-night. For certain by to-morrow night."

"Well, come back in a better temper," I said testily.

"I'll do that, I promise you, whatever happens."

CHAPTER XVIII

VOOGDT PUTS THE COMPANY IN HIS VEST-POCKET

FOR once I was almost glad to be rid of him and got about my business ashore, glad to have some one to talk to for a change. Night came, but no Voogdt. He was missing all next day, and I was reading in my bunk late at night before he returned. Then I heard him come aboard, cross the deck and descend the companion, and I put down my book to see him enter.

I thought he was drunk. He looked it exactly: flushed, his eyes wild, his speech incoherent. And the first thing he did was to put a gold-topped magnum on the cabin-table and rout out two tumblers from a locker.

"Been painting the town red?" I asked.

He made no answer, but opened the champagne, smothering the report with a handkerchief wrapped round the cork and handed one tumbler to me.

"To you, partner," he said, and drained the other at a gulp. "That's good. That's the first to-day."

"Looks like it," I said dryly.

"'Tis, all the same. Things are oft not what they seem. Do I look drunk?"

"You do."

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"So I am." The only sign of sobriety about him was that he kept his voice low. "Drunk with joy! A most intoxicating tipple. Oh! I am pleased with myself, James. Not that I've any reason to be. These past wasted months! The blind mole I've been! To think that accident should do what mighty reason could not achieve. Here's to Accident and Reason, Luck and Charity, Voogdt and West!"

He poured out and disposed of another tumbler of the wine.

"Where've you been?"

"To Plymouth—fool that I am. I ought to have gone miles inland—miles and miles and miles from any seaport town. But how was I to know? And time was short. I've found out where the profits come from, Jem!"

"You haven't!" I said, jumping up so that I hit my head against a deck-beam.

"I have. I've got the Company in my vest-pocket. Thousands of pounds, Jem. Thousands! And I think we're entitled to a partnership in the show."

"Has it anything to do with the shooting business and our being nearly run down?"

"The shooting, almost for certain, and perhaps the other thing. 'Tisn't all clear to me yet, and I'm not going to tell you much until it is. But we've got the Axel Trading-Company by the hair, and there's enough profits hanging to the business for us to have a share without hurting anybody. And that share I mean to have."

His mention of the Company brought the two girls into my head.

"Is it very fishy?" I asked.

"It isn't too fishy for me," he said. "And I think I can guarantee it won't hurt your conscience. In fact, I really can't see that it's dishonest at all. It's smart dealing—that's Ward, of course. Cheyne hasn't the brains. But I can't see that it hurts anybody. Enough of that. I've finished talking for the present. Are we loaded?"

"We shall be by to-morrow evening."

"If we aren't, we'll sail all the same. There's no further need to keep up this cargo nonsense. It's only a waste of money. That business'll have to be rearranged. We must get back to Terneuzen as hard as we can lick, to meet Ward."

"He isn't there."

"He will be before we are. I sent him a wire to-day that'll give him palpitation of the heart. Oh, ho! There'll be a sitting in council when we arrive. Now finish the fizz and turn in. Not another word do I say about it till we're out at sea. The very deck-beams might shout it aloud. I was so scared I shouldn't get back to you—that I should be killed in a railway-accident, or something of that sort—that I posted you a letter before I left Plymouth to put you on the track, in case of my demise, and now I'm nervous about that letter. You'll get it in the morning—and mind you do get it, too. Good night, partner."

A LETTER-CARD addressed in Voogdt's writing awaited me at the agent's next day and I took it back to him unopened.

"Since you're not dead," I said in explanation as I handed it to him.

"It's your letter, strictly speaking," he said. "You're too conscientious. Stick it up in the pipe-rack and open it when we're past the Mewstone to-night. That'll please both parties."

Seeing he treated it so lightly I forgot all about it in the course of the day's work, and it was late that evening and we were well past the Start before Voogdt, who was at the wheel, recalled it to me.

"Don't you want to read your letter?" he asked slyly.

"I'd forgotten it." I ran below, took it from the rack and tore off the edges. It seemed at first sight to be a collection of initials.

DEAR J.,
Ask a chemist what WO_2 means.
A. V.

I went back on deck with it in my hand.

"What does WO_2 mean?" I asked.

"Ask a chemist, I told you. Ask Ward. I wonder whether he'd shoot you or poison you if you did?"

"Don't talk like a fool. Ward's an honest man."

"I think so, too. But, mind you, it's no good blinking the fact that if we were out of the way it'd mean big money in his pocket. These things make one ponder. That running-down business—I'm not saying it had anything to do with our people, because I'm pretty well sure it hadn't—but it would have been a fine thing for them if it had come off. We happen to represent Ward's one mistake.

"I suppose you were down on your luck when he met you, and he took you for an

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ordinary coasting-skipper. As for me, I'm not at all the sort of man they want poking round their wharf. The average coasting-Jack wouldn't have given any trouble. He's too stupid to try smelling into his employer's affairs, as I do. There's the result in your hand. Tear it up in little bits and throw it overboard."

"I'm as wise as I was before," I said, doing as he told me.

"You've only to go to a chemist to know as much as I do, and then there'd be two more in their secret. Up to now I fancy it's confined to five people."

"Who's the fifth?"

"That solicitor-clerk of theirs must be in it, I think. Carwithen, he's called. To think how they've been skimming the cream of the market these last eighteen months! This German company means complications, though. Van Noppen's blocks ahead of Cheyne. That explosive pretext is noble."

"I'm still in the dark," I said. "Do get it off your chest straight instead of hinting like this. You muddle me. Where do the profits come in, and what is WO_2?"

"WO_2, my son, is the chemical formula for wolframite or tungsten-dioxide," he said. "Its commercial value is about two hundred and forty pounds a ton. And that mud we've been ballasting with is almost pure WO_2. Now do you see the game?"

"Two hundred and forty quid a ton!" I said, aghast. "And we've been averaging over twenty tons a week. That's——"

"Reckoning in the *Olive Branch* and the *Kismet*, I calculate they're turning over about fifteen thousand pounds a week out of the ballast we've been taking back to England. *Ballast!* Think of it! Of course all this secrecy means awful waste, but they can't be netting much less than three or four thousand a week at the worst. And that's been going on for eighteen months! Get your mind attuned to those figures and you'll begin to understand why the Germans shot at me and why we must watch Ward and Cheyne like sworn enemies until we know better."

I breathed hard, fairly staggered for once. I couldn't realize such figures. Four thousand a week—two hundred thousand a year—over a quarter of a million pounds in eighteen months. Our footy little freights, thirty pounds a voyage or so, shriveled to nothing in the face of such a sum, and I said as much aloud.

"FOUR thousand a week! Three small boats and rent to pay out of it—a hundred and twenty at the outside. What a profit!"

"Not so fast," Voogdt interrupted. "That four thousand is all profit. I tell you their turnover is nearer fifteen thousand a week. I've allowed two-thirds off that for working-expenses."

"But that's nonsense. How on earth can they possibly spend more than a hundred and fifty a week? They couldn't do it, man."

"Ah!" said Voogdt. "But there's one item you don't take into account, and I'll bet it's monstrous—awful!"

"What item?"

"Waste. Ghastly waste. Think a minute of all the precautions they've taken to insure secrecy. Do you think they dare sell those heaps of stuff just where we dump them on the ballast-quays? Not much. That stuff's rubbish—just mud ballast—till they've got it stowed away in their inland warehouses. They daren't even look anxious about it. It lies on those quays for any one to take away. I expect it often is taken away by barges. Who knows how many small craft round the coast at this minute are carting it about in all good faith as ballast, never dreaming there's a little fortune under their hatches? No, you mark my words. We shall find waste is the biggest item against the firm; and heart-breaking waste, too, for they daren't put out a finger to prevent it."

"What's the good of the stuff?" I asked.

"They use it for hardening steel—especially engineers' saws. Rum stuff it is. You know when ordinary steel gets hot, it loses its temper and goes soft. Well, tungsten steel don't. Friction only makes it harder, so that saws made of it cut the better for use, and don't wear out half as fast. That's what sent up the price. When wolframite was only used for chemical purposes you could buy it for about twenty-five quid a ton. Then some genius discovered its effect on steel, and its cost jumped almost a thousand per cent. at once. And it's used for electric-light filaments, too. I wonder what effect this supply of ours has had upon the market so far?"

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"What are you going to do when we reach Terneuzen?"

"Play with my cards face-upwards on the table. Tell them plainly how much we know, and ask for a sixth-share between us. That's not greedy. There's enough and to spare and, since we're doing the work and standing the risks, I think we're entitled to our whack."

"Who d'ye mean by 'we'?" I asked.

"You and myself. I did think of letting 'Kiah in, but not Rance. Even 'Kiah—he's a good chap, but I doubt whether sharing profits is likely to do him any good. He might only lose his head and play the fool with the money. What do you think about him? Wouldn't it be wiser to give him a decent rise in wages and put away good bonuses for him from time to time without his knowledge?"

"Seems to me you're busy counting your chickens before they're hatched," I said. "Better wait till you've got the share before you start spending it."

"Maybe, though I think we're safe to get decent terms. But, as you pertinently remark, there's nothing can be settled till we've reached Terneuzen.

> "Blow, ye winds, heigh-ho!
> For Cali-for-nio.
> There's plenty gold,
> So I've been told,
> On the banks of the Sacramento."

"Who's shouting at the top of his voice now?" I demanded.

"I be. *Sum. Je suis. Ich bin.* I will, too. I'll kick up as much row as I please. I don't come into a fortune every day. Go below and to bed, James. If you can't sleep, you can amuse yourself doing sums on a bit of paper. That's how I've spent most of my spare time, these last twenty-four hours."

I turned in, but of course I couldn't sleep. For a couple of hours I lay awake figuring out the results of the discovery. Ward and Miss Lavington—and the Brand girl, too—came into my mind, and the more I thought of them the less I liked the notion of forcing them to accept us as partners. They'd always treated me well, and it seemed a scurvy way to repay them.

Then Voogdt. I'd always liked the man. Liked him from our first meeting when, dusty and hungry and cheerful, he had thrown his broken boots into Exmouth Dock and philosophized over them. He'd been a good shipmate to me, and I had been glad to know he'd benefited in pocket and health by cruising with me. Now that was all altered—turned upside-down. Here was my friend, a joyous-hearted pauper, proposing to take my employers by the throats, so to speak, and wring money out of them, money that he wanted me to share. It was too much of an inversion of things to please me, and I couldn't pretend I liked it. He'd talked of 'Kiah being spoiled by money. How would money react on him?

At last I pushed open the skylight and called him.

"Wheel ho! Voogdt."

"Hello yourself."

"I don't approve of this business. It's blackmail."

"Quite right," he answered. "So it is. And I'm going to do it."

"I ain't," I said. "I stand out. Where's your philosophy, you who scorn property?"

"Money isn't property," he said. "Money's a tool. I never objected to tools—things to do things with. Scythe, spade, plane, ships, machinery—I love 'em all. It's clothes and furniture, houses, farms and land make me tired. They'd weight me down, man. But money? Money's the grandest tool of all. Property—go to! It's fluid energy; compressible energy. It annihilates space and time, makes war and peace, makes grass to grow, builds ships and houses for fools to live in. With it I can carry the labor of a thousand men bottled in a scrap of paper in my vest-pocket. No. Money's good enough for me. Call it property, energy, a tool, what you will, I'm out after it this trip."

"I'm not," I said.

"Then go to bed, and cease bothering."

I slammed down the skylight, conscious of a crick in my neck, turned in again and managed to catch an hour's uneasy nap before change of watch.

CHAPTER XIX

CARDS ON THE TABLE

BESIDES the distaste I had conceived for the whole business I was naturally inclined to be anxious about the reception we were to get at Terneuzen. If the German company could find it worth their while to try and run us down and shoot at Voogdt, what were we to expect from our

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own people when we came demanding a share in the concern?

I had never liked Voogdt's habit of poking his nose into their business, and now they would be sure to think me a partner in his precious attempt at blackmail. The worst of it was that I couldn't pull out very well. If I refused to stand by Voogdt, that didn't prevent him using his knowledge. If we had a row about it, subsequent inquiries might arise, or suspicions be roused on the part of 'Kiah or Rance. And if I went straight to the company and repudiated Voogdt altogether, for aught I knew he might be shot at by somebody else, and this time with better aim—and I liked him a lot too well for that.

In a word, I didn't know what to do. I couldn't persuade him to lie low and do nothing. I couldn't quarrel with him. I couldn't take the company's side against him. And yet I didn't want to be his partner in the matter. So I did the next best thing—said nothing at all.

This I was the more able to do, for Voogdt took the whole conduct of affairs out of my hands from the moment we landed at Terneuzen.

I had no mind to complain of that. His brains were worth double mine. His was the discovery, and his the right to exploit it. But Cheyne bitterly resented his attitude of command. Tricked as Cheyne had been by his antagonist from the very start, I admit he had some of my sympathy.

Voogdt, in the highest spirits, met sulks with light chaff, and his manner, a blend of good temper and condescension, would have irritated a saint. It drove Cheyne to the point of ferocity. Even as he tried again and again to address me as the principal member on our side, so Voogdt persisted throughout all their first conversation in treating him with patronizing politeness, as though regarding him only as an agent of that more worthy antagonist, Ward.

All this took place early on a rain-swept morning off the wharf. Cheyne, dressed in slovenly fashion, with a colored kerchief about his neck in place of a collar, and a general air of frowsy sleep under his dripping mackintosh, came off to us in a boat from shore, and greeted me sullenly.

"Morning," he said. "Come below, will you. I want a word with you."

When Voodgt followed us down-stairs Cheyne looked at him savagely.

"What d'you want?" he demanded.

"To hear this word of yours with the skipper. Don't look so sulky, my dear sir. We're partners, you must know. There's our registered trade-mark."

He pointed to the little looking-glass over the pipe-rack. On it was written, apparently with the corner of a cake of soap, the formula WO_2 in letters six inches high. Cheyne went livid.

"You fool!" he said savagely. "Anybody might have looked in through the skylight!"

And he rubbed the letters into indistinguishable blurred streaks with his fingers before he sat down again.

"NOW out with it," he said. "What's your price?"

"Are you empowered to deal?" Voogdt asked sharply.

"Of course I am."

"I don't see that there's any 'of course' about it," said Voogdt. "I understand Mr. Ward and Miss Lavington are the largest shareholders, and I prefer to deal with principals. All the same, it may save time to tell you that our price is a sixth-share in the concern. You can mention that to Mr. Ward and, if he consents, he can come and say so."

"A sixth-share! And if we don't consent?"

"Then Messrs. Voogdt and West start in opposition to you within a week."

"That'd be terrible blow, wouldn't it?" Cheyne tried to sneer. "What harm could you do us, with your one twopenny-ha'penny boat?"

Voogdt leaned over and tapped him on the shoulder.

"We should be the worst opponents you ever had," he said. "And shall I tell you why? Because we don't want a lot. Three full cargoes, or four at most, dumped the other side the water, and then sold openly, would make us and finish you. Two hundred and forty tons at two hundred and forty quid—and we retire from business with over fifty thousand pounds between us! Half of that's enough for my simple needs, and I think I can say the same for the skipper here."

"You've got to find a market," Cheyne objected.

"Advertisement'll do that. 'To engineers and steel-founders: Two hundred

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and forty tons of wolframite for sale in sixty-ton lots. Purchasers can view. on quayside at Shoreham, Southampton, Portsmouth and Newhaven.' That would suit your book, wouldn't it? That and the consequent inquiries as to the source of the stuff. It's no go, Master Cheyne. We've got you in a cleft stick, and you may as well climb down."

Cheyne cursed us both roundly. "You haven't thought the thing out, yet," he said. "You don't know the losses. Besides, a lump like that would cause a drop in price immediately."

"It wouldn't knock the bottom out of the market," Voogdt said calmly. "That'd happen later when the deposits here became known. That one sale would be enough for us, and we should be able to retire from business. You needn't grumble, you know. You must have all made a decent pile in the last eighteen months. That's our weak point, I won't deny. The only way in which you can hurt us is by realizing you've got enough and giving the show away yourselves. That would knock us out, I freely admit.

"You see I'm open with you. But you won't do it. Better take in two new partners. As to the losses, I'm not oversanguine. I can guess what those losses mean pretty well. But we'll manage to cut down rather a lot of them in the future. I have some ideas — you see, I've seen both ends of this business."

"How?"

"That I'll tell you when the new partnership's in existence. Mr. Ward's in Terneuzen, I suppose? Yes? Then you'd better go ashore again and arrange a meeting as soon as we land. No sense in wasting time, I fancy."

"Which of you sent him that telegram?" Cheyne asked, as he got up to go.

"I did."

"Bigger fool you. You seem bent on giving the show away."

"What did you say in the telegram?" I asked when he had gone.

"Go to Axel at once and await events."

"That doesn't give away much."

"Well, I signed it W. O. Two," Voogdt admitted, looking whimsically out of the corner of one eye. "I thought it'd make him hustle, and apparently it's had the right effect."

WE GOT alongside the wharf after breakfast, and soon afterward, looking through the cabin-skylight, saw Ward's tall figure, accompanied by two women, hurrying along the embankment through the driving rain.

"He's brought the girls," I said, in surprise.

"Bother!" said Voogdt. "But perhaps it's just as well. May as well have all parties consent."

I watched them go into the office together and shortly afterward Cheyne called down to us to say they were expecting us.

Voogdt shook his head.

"Not much," he said. "We'll meet them on our own ground, here in the cabin. I'm shy of the whole lot of them since that scare the Germans gave me. Come aboard," he called to Cheyne, "and bring the others with you."

That delayed them a little, but in a few minutes they all emerged from the office door in a little group and came hurrying down the wharf. We helped them across the gangway and into the cabin, where they sat down, and then we all sat and stared at each other without a word. I don't know which of the six of us was most embarrassed, but if any one of them felt worse than myself I'm sorry for him.

I say "him" advisedly, for neither of the two girls showed a trace of nervousness. When I made some bungling remark about the filthy weather and asked them if I should take their cloaks, Pamily Brand tittered aloud and then tried to look preternaturally solemn. As for Miss Lavington, she slipped off her dripping wraps with a smile and handed them to me as though she were entering the box of a theater.

That was their air: they might have been just onlookers at a play. I could understand it of the Brand girl, she being only a small shareholder, and, besides, for all her ease of manner, I thought I saw the light of war in her eyes. But it gave me a good impression of Miss Lavington's nerves that she should be so tranquil and composed.

Voogdt seemed as businesslike as Ward himself. There was not a trace of the farceur, nor of the weather-bitten shoeless vagabond. He was the executive, all over. As for me, I felt like a pickpocket caught in the act, and Cheyne looked hangdog enough to be my accomplice. So we started the confab.

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CHAPTER XX

I ENTER A MILLIONAIRE CORPORATION

WARD led off, blinking curiously at Voogdt through his spectacles.

"Mr. Voogdt? How d'you do? I wish I could honestly say I was pleased to make your acquaintance."

Voogdt nodded with a smile, not in the least perturbed.

"You may even come to that in time," he said pleasantly. "I'm sorry to be in the rôle of blackmailer on our first meeting, but I hope to prove myself a useful member of the syndicate later on. I'm glad to meet you, in any case. I've read that paper of yours on Emil Fischer and his work, and it interested me very much."

The Brand girl peeped sideways wickedly at Ward to see how he took this form of attack, but he took no more notice of her than of Voogdt.

"Are we here to say pretty things to each other or to talk business?" he asked dryly. "Are we to understand you ask a sixth-share each?"

"No, no. One sixth-share between us."

"And how much time do you give us for considering your offer?"

"No time at all. I'm sorry to hold a pistol at your heads in this way, but I needn't point out to you that this business is—well, somewhat precarious, need I?"

"Lord, no!" said Ward with a half comic, half rueful grimace. "We are to understand, then, that your price is one sixth-share in this concern. From this date?"

"That's so. We don't want to meddle with your accumulated profits. You've always treated us decently."

"Thanks. Therefore you repay us by blackmailing us. And do you propose to continue running this boat in return for your sixth-share?"

"I hadn't thought of that." Voogdt hesitated, so I thought it my turn to cut in.

"Yes, we'll do that," I said. "We're prepared to go on acting under your instructions."

Voogdt looked round at me with his chin stuck out.

"Not so fast," he said. "I'm making terms, not you. The present methods of trading are too wasteful. You'll all agree there?"

They all four assented.

"Then we must alter them a little. If my suggestions are impracticable—and we'll decide that by the views of the majority—then we go on as before. Now—yes or no, please?"

"We'd like a few minutes to consider," said Ward.

I got up, Voogdt following my lead at once.

"All right," he said. "You can have ten minutes," and we went on deck together to await their decision.

It was a slow business, walking up and down in the wet. I felt too angry with Voogdt and too ashamed of myself to make talk, and the surroundings were anything but cheerful.

After what seemed a long ten minutes, Cheyne appeared at the companion, beckoning us, and we went below together.

"We've no choice but to consent," Ward said as soon as we were seated. "D'you want anything in writing?"

"Does any partnership-deed exist between you at present?" Voogdt asked. "No? Then, speaking for myself, your word's good enough for me."

"Let me say one thing," I said. "I'm not responsible for any share in this business and I feel thoroughly ashamed of putting the screw on you in this way——"

"So you ought," said Pamily Brand sharply, and Cheyne grunted some sort of chorus to her.

"'Tisn't either of you I'm thinking of," I went on. "As for you, Cheyne, I'd rob you like a shot, and I don't suppose Miss Brand's loss as a small shareholder is anything to cry out about. But if it's any use apologizing to you, Ward, and to Miss Lavington, I do apologize most sincerely. And I won't touch a penny of this sixth-share."

"Then I shall bag the lot," Voogdt said coolly. "Don't you try and be a bigger fool than nature made you, Jem West. They can afford it well, and we're going to be valuable partners to the firm."

Ward said nothing, only wrinkling up his eyes and looking at me keenly—to see if I were in earnest, I suppose. But Miss Lavington unexpectedly took Voogdt's side.

"I think that's silly, Mr. West," she said, in her lazy way. "We've quite made up our minds to paying, in any case. In fact your friend might have insisted on a

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larger share, if he'd liked, and I don't see how we could have refused him. If any one is entitled to share, you are, after the discomfort of this Winter's trading for us."

Ward nodded.

"I agree with Miss Lavington," he said. "You may take it from me, West, that I shall pay with much greater pleasure if I think you're getting a fair share."

Both of them were evidently sincere, and I looked at Miss Brand to see if she agreed with them. She sniffed derisively.

"Nobody imagines you're at the bottom of this bother," she said. "You're too stupid. But since your partner wishes it—" she glowered at Voogdt— "I think you're entitled to a share in the proceeds."

"Good enough," I said. "That's a majority. I accept the partnership."

"And now," Ward said, turning to Voogdt, "we'd like to hear your suggestions.

"THE first suggestion is that we pay off the other two boats and run only the *Luck and Charity*. And the next is that we sack our two paid hands and ship Mr. Cheyne here as first mate."

That upset things at once. I couldn't see much sense in the suggestion myself, but I knew Voogdt must have good reasons for them, so said nothing. Ward was silent, too, and Miss Lavington only made a mild protest.

But Pamily Brand was up in arms in a moment and Cheyne swore aloud. He'd be hanged if he was going coasting; he had enough to do where he was. When he'd done laying down the law, Ward cut in.

"Reasons?" he asked Voogdt.

"Two good reasons. Economy's the first. You've got three boats, and for a guess you're wasting two cargoes of every three. Is that about the figure?"

"Very nearly."

"Good. Then the *Luck and Charity* can save 'em all. Now that West and myself know what we're doing, we can help in arranging the removals from the ports. One boat can distribute them better, too, and with less risk of suspicion. You've been planting the stuff too thickly—there must be heaps of it lying in nearly every port from Inverness to the Land's End. And you've got to wait your chance to touch it. All that means risk."

"As if we didn't know that already!" said Cheyne, contemptuously. "How shall we be any better off if there's less heaps to choose from?"

"You forget there'll be no need of hoodwinking your one crew. You and I and West here between us can get the stuff shifted. With care we shouldn't lose one cargo in four—that's better than two in three. And the *Luck and Charity* trading one week to Plymouth and the next to Sunderland won't get noticed as much as if she was going over the same ground month after month, as she is now."

"That's sense," said Ward. "Now why discharge your men?"

"That's the same as the second reason for paying off the other boats. I was coming to that. We've no right to risk any lives but our own."

Cheyne laughed aloud. "Risking lives!" he cried. "In the coasting-trade! What a risk to be afraid of!"

Even Ward looked curious, and it was to him Voogdt addressed himself, disregarding Cheyne entirely.

"Don't you know of extra risks?" he asked. "Would it surprise you to know we've had a near shave of being intentionally run down, and that I've had a bullet through my leg in this trade?"

"It would surprise me very much."

"Be surprised then, for it's true."

I think Ward—as I once had—thought Voogdt suffered from illusions, for he turned to me for corroboration, and I nodded and said it was quite true.

They made Voogdt tell the whole story, which he did very well, and then Ward said he thought Voogdt's suggestions would bear consideration. Again the girls agreed. But Cheyne said nothing, which was just as well, since we were five to one against him. Voogdt's tale had sealed the partnership. There was no longer any feeling of divided interests. I was glad to see how Ward's opinion of him had altered.

"We shall have to devise ways and means, Mr. Voogdt," he said. "I'm afraid you'll find some difficulty in acting as agents ashore as well as sailors afloat. Besides, who's to look after the business here?"

"I'll do that," said Pamily Brand, in an instant.

"That you won't," I said as quickly. "This is no place for a girl, with those German sheds handy."

"They wouldn't hurt me," she said.

"They won't get the chance. No, if you

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want to help, take charge of the Snow Hill office and send Carwithen here."

Ward laughed. "I must really congratulate you on your knowledge of the business. How on earth did you know about Carwithen?"

I indicated Voogdt with a nod of the head.

"He's my general-information-bureau, I said. "I think he knows your business backwards."

"THERE'S one thing I don't know," Voogdt said. "I don't know how you discovered this stuff here. That's puzzled me more than a little. Would you mind satisfying my curiosity?"

"Not at all," said Ward, and told us the whole story, the others interrupting every now and then with comments or corrections.

It seemed that Cheyne was the accidental means of the discovery. He'd been at Ghent in one of Warbeck's vessels, loading for Rio, and while his boat was waiting to be let out of Terneuzen Locks he slipped ashore to have a final drink before they sailed.

By some means or other—I suppose he'd been saying farewell more than once—he dropped his watch over the embankment, and, flying open as it fell, the inner case got coated with mud. The watch, a good English lever, went on working, so instead of wiping the mud off he used to show it about as a curiosity—letting people see what a fine watch he had, to work with dried mud all over its vitals.

On his return from that voyage he was holidaying in Birmingham and called at Mason College to take his cousin Pamela Brand out to lunch. Miss Lavington and Ward joined them, and with two students and one professor present the talk at table wandered round to chemistry. Cheyne, thinking to puzzle Ward, scraped a little of the mud from inside his watch and defied Ward to tell him what it was. Ward took it away, analyzed it and pronounced it to be nearly pure wolframite.

Even then, Cheyne only laughed at him. He was too big a fool to appreciate the value of the discovery. But the others soon convinced him of that and, once persuaded, it was his suggestion that they should try to do a deal in the stuff.

His methods were crude. At first he was all for just loading Miss Lavington's steamers with the mud and selling it openly. However, they soon saw that game wouldn't answer, and Ward and Cheyne between them devised the plan of hiring small coasters and shipping the mud as ballast. Miss Lavington sold her steamers to provide the necessary capital, and for eighteen months all had gone well, and would have been going well even now, if it hadn't been for Ward's mistaking me for the average coasting-skipper, with a taste for liquor to boot.

"Do you mean to tell me that all this embankment is solid wolframite?" Voogdt asked, amazed.

"Far from it. It only occurs in patches, so far as we've been able to discover. Of course, we couldn't attempt anything like a survey. That would have attracted attention at once. When I first came out here to look into the matter I pretended to be botanizing and got most of my specimens for analysis by pulling up weeds and sampling the earth that clung to their roots. Give me a scrap of paper, will you?"

I tore the fly-leaf out of a book from the little shelf over his head, and on it he drew a rough map of the wharf, embankment and lock-gates, with part of the pasture-fields behind them.

"There," said he, roughly shading in one or two patches with his pencil. "You can see the deposits are rather scattered. The bank on this side the lock-gates is nearly pure, but it was impossible to touch that, with traffic passing at every hour of the day and night. Besides, we shouldn't have been able to take away canal-embankments, of course.

"Thence it spreads in a fan-shape into the fields behind, and then thins out and disappears. There are two other small patches between here and Terneuzen, but where these cut through the embankment we have taken care to repair the patch and cover them with road-metal. Then comes the deposit we're working—a large patch, almost as rich as that forbidden piece by the locks—and another lot crops out in the fields about a quarter of a mile west of us."

"How about the German sheds?" I asked.

Ward shook his head.

"I don't know. The moment we decided on working here we stopped taking samples. There was more here than we should ever be

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able to take away, and if I'd gone on collecting specimens it would have been certain to attract attention sooner or later. And from what you tell us they certainly don't encourage inquiries down there now. That's the worst of the business," he burst out, impatiently. "We daren't ask questions, or show curiosity, and all the time we're working in the dark, not knowing what other people are thinking of us. To think this shooting-business could have happened to you here, right on our ground, and that we were altogether ignorant of it!"

"That won't happen again, anyhow," I said, to soothe him. "After this you'll have two more pairs of eyes at your service."

IT MAY seem a strange thing to say, but before Ward had done I'd begun to feel sorry for him. The more the tale unfolded the more one saw the risks and difficulties in their way. Some of the difficulties had been foreseen at the start, but they had multiplied tenfold as the work went on. It may seem like wasted sympathy, for he was prosperous enough now. But I thought how he must have felt, those first few months, before the initial outlay had been recovered, and I was downright sorry for the man, knowing what he must have gone through.

He had thrown up his position. It was at his advice that Miss Lavington had parted with her capital to embark in the most risky enterprise ever heard of; and discovery, which might have taken place at any moment, would have meant financial ruin for both of them. I don't think she was the sort of woman to blame him if it had, but I wouldn't have been in his shoes at the time for all that.

It must have been a maddening business, take it all round, for all the big profits. Remembering Pamily Brand's "I hate waste," I began to make apologies for even her temper, for waste had been the key-note from the first. Waste of energy, waste of material and waste of money, under the most tantalizing circumstances, often under their very noses. Time and again the mud-heaps had been taken away to sea by other boats as ballast, just as Voogdt had guessed. Tons and tons had been removed by farmers' carts as a top-dressing for land, and railway-companies had dumped hundreds more over their embankments. Sometimes port by-laws had interfered with them—out-of-date rules and regulations prohibiting the removal of ballast from the quays by land. Worst of all, they never dared to show the slightest anxiety about the stuff.

Ward described his emotions through one long Summer's day at Looe, where he had gone to try and arrange for the removal of one consignment. In the morning he had worried because children, playing on the heap, were taking away the mud on their boots, but the afternoon brought him a sterner lesson in self-control. He had to sit and grin and bear it while a gang of navvies shoveled the lot—five thousand pounds' worth of his property—down behind the piles and planks of a new quay-extension.

"And they only used bad language about it!" he said, with a quaint note of pathos that made us laugh, strung up as we were. "I gathered that they would have preferred scavengers' waste—tins and broken crockery and glass—as being coarser in texture and not so slimy."

Cheyne topped that story by instancing the three cargoes we had taken to Dartmouth in the past nine months, not one of which, he assured us, had come to hand.

On the whole it was with mixed emotions that we contemplated our new partnership. The matter of paying off the other boats and men was left over for later discussion; and, the rain lessening a little, Ward and the girls returned to Terneuzen, while Cheyne and we two set about getting off hatches, and preparing our hold for the first consignment of wolframite in which we had an interest.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PAMILY PERSON IS JAUNTY

IT WAS queer to see the change of attitude on their part after Voogdt had told his tale about the shooting-business. It was as though we were accepted as partners upon a friendly basis forthwith. I thought Pamily Brand held a little aloof from me personally, but she wasn't really unpleasant in any way, and as for Ward and Miss Lavington, they were as nice as they could be.

Cheyne sulked, certainly, but one could find excuses for him. He stood to lose most by the new arrangement, for Ward agreed with Voogdt about paying off the other boats—not at once, but each in turn with

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an interval between them, so as not to excite remark—and it was decided that Cheyne should go to sea with us.

Small wonder he kicked at the prospect. Hard and fit though I was, I couldn't call the Winter cruising a trifle, and I never remember looking forward to Spring as I did that year. And Cheyne was anything but fit. A year and more of shore life, self-indulgence and fuddling had knocked him all to pieces, and he was flabby, soft as a woman. So he sulked, and Miss Brand was cool to me, apparently considering me responsible for this part of the arrangements.

It wouldn't have been any good trying to lay the blame on Voogdt. He and she were hand in glove. She'd turned right round since his story was told, and in her eyes he couldn't do wrong now. Naturally, being the clever chap he was, and she a quick-tongued hussy enough, they often squabbled; but they took a delight in it, and were only the better friends for every spirited quarrel.

I believe she used to come aboard on purpose, and he'd turn her accusations to chaff and her statements to nonsense, and have her on about the suffrage and the woman-question till she was fit to swear.

ONE day she was down watching us work and arguing with Voogdt. We were putting a patch in the foresail and, as it was wet weather, were working in the cabin. The place was full of the crumpled heavy canvas, and she had to stand by the door. First she started bossing about, of course. Our sewing was all wrong, according to her, but after a weak demonstration of how it ought to be done she took off the heavy leather sailmaker's palm, gave up her needle to Voogdt and started arguing about something else.

I forget what it was all about, but Voogdt posed her with a remark she pretended wasn't worth answering.

"So I'll answer it as men answer their wives when they're worsted in argument," she said. "I'll swear. That saves mighty Man the trouble of thinking. 'Blankety-blank nonsense,' he'd say, and call it an argument. And your argument is very much blanked nonsense!"

She looked jaunty and dainty, her cheeks rosy with her own chatter and her eyes dancing. Standing in the cabin-door, feet apart, her hands on her hips, she made a pretty caricature of a fishwife.

I looked up from my sewing and told her she reminded me of a kid breaking a teacup, while its mother is up-stairs making the beds. Voogdt laughed aloud, and she turned on him in a flash.

"Who's mother?" she demanded.

"Oh, ho! I know," said he. "And so do you, Miss B. Sc. She's a big old lady, is mother, and her name begins with an N. You wait till she's got time to beckon to you. You'll get it. You'll find trouble waiting for you somewhere."

That was his way of talking. I could make neither head nor tail of it, but Miss Brand seemed to understand well enough, for her face went crimson. But she stood her ground.

"I defy her!" she cried, laughing too, for all her flushed face. "I defy her. Others she may discipline, but not me. I'm an educated woman. What's education for, if we can't shake off these chains? How about you, if it comes to that?"

I stared in astonishment, wondering what on earth she meant. But Voogdt took her up quickly enough.

"Time enough," he said. "Besides, I'm a looker-on by temperament." Then he turned serious. "I'm tainted, too. I've only half a lung on one side. Keep to the point. You talk of educated women. Haven't there been any desertions from your ranks?"

"Dozens. The weaker vessels. We grow stronger by eliminating them. I shall never desert. I'm armed at all points."

"Say that to me ten years hence," said Voogdt, shaking a finger at her. "I tell you mother's coming for you, teacup-smasher. In the dusk of some warm evening, or the cool of some fresh dawn when the birds sing—just when you least expect it—she'll come down-stairs, and you'll find she's got a slipper handy for her naughty child. Poor slipper!"

She sniffed derisively. "Keep your pity till it's wanted. I'm not worrying, and—and I'll smash as many teacups as I please. So there!"

THE wind hanging in the east, now light, now strong, we had a week ashore, and a very pleasant week it was. There was work to do, of course, but nothing out of the way, and we patched

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sails and set up shrouds and pottered about generally from morning till dusk. Ward would join us at about midday and the girls in the afternoon; then after tea they went back to Terneuzen together and we put on our shore clothes and joined them at dinner.

Very jolly, those parties were. Sometimes we'd chat, and sometimes play cards. But whatever we did, we always felt we were welcome. I believe Ward would have admitted he was rather glad of the partnership than otherwise. All the sea part of the business had been in Cheyne's hands hitherto, and whether Ward trusted him or no I could never tell. He couldn't like him much, that was certain. No man could stand the chap for long, especially the quiet student type of man. He was too blatant, too ignorant, for even me to like; and Ward in his heart may have been glad to have Voogdt and myself to share his responsibility.

In pursuance of the new arrangements I sacked Rance, giving him his fare home, and told 'Kiah he must be prepared to leave us at the first English port we touched.

He refused to go, as flatly as a South Devon man can refuse anything, which is as much as to say he argued about it.

"Wha's that for?" he demanded.

I told him our employers were cutting down expenses, and that Mr. Cheyne was going to help work the *Luck and Charity*, whereon he promptly offered to stay for nothing.

"You an 'e, and Mr. Vute, there idn' one of 'e can cook," he said.

"Nonsense. Two of us can, as you know."

"Skipper an' mate cookin'! 'Tes redicklus. You let me stay. I don' want no pay f'r a month 'r two. I done middlin' well out o' you lately, an' there won't be nothin' goin' on 'ome till March, when salmon-fishin' starts. You let me stop along o' you an' bear a 'and for my grub an' lodge."

"Orders are orders, and go you must," I said, "and there's an end of it."

But he only grumbled and maundered on. "What do 'em want t' sack me for if I don't want no pay? Funny sort o' comp'ny they be, not to let a man bear a 'and when 'e wants to do it f'r naught. You let me stay before, when times was 'ard."

"Funny sort o' comp'ny" struck the note I feared—the note of suspicion—and again I began to feel sorry for my partners in crime. They'd been dreading those little suspicions for months, but this was my first experience in that line, and I didn't like it. So I said no more, and at dinner that night reported the whole conversation.

"Do you think he suspects anything?" Ward asked.

"Suspect? Not he!" Voogdt took the words out of my mouth. "But he'll talk, if he's sacked. Half the South Devon waterside'll hear of it in a fortnight. How West, who allowed 'Kiah to spend a Winter with him on no pay and a fish-diet, sacked him on the plea of economy and replaced him by Cheyne, who obviously is a more expensive article. We shall have to keep him on."

"I won't have it," I said. "It's all very well to risk our own lives, but——"

"He must take his chance, that's all. All's risk at sea. You daren't raise his pay now, but we'll insure his life behind his back in favor of his relatives, and bank him a good bonus now and then. That's as much as we can do. We daren't sack him."

"More expense," Cheyne growled, but Austin spiked his guns at once.

"My dear chap," he said affably, "the extra expense is really a small matter. It needn't touch the founders' shares. West and myself'll do all that. Besides, see how much trouble is saved all round. You stay over here, managing the part of the business you're accustomed to. There'll be no need to shift anybody here in your place, or to make changes, any one of which may excite remark. On reflection I'm sure you'll agree it's the best plan."

Cheyne agreed at that, you may be sure; but the other three looked thoughtful. I said nothing, meaning to go for Voogdt later, but Miss Brand, as usual, had some remarks to make.

"I quite agree with the bonuses and all that sort of thing," she put in. "But for once I'm inclined to agree with Capt—with Mr. West as well. If there's going to be any risks of shooting, 'Kiah should be warned. I'll do it."

We all cried out at that, Cheyne loudest of all.

"You'll give the show away," he said.

"No, I won't. I'll scare the big lump out of his sea-boots, though, if I know my Devonshire."

"You're not from Devon, are you?" I asked.

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"Not I. I'm Lancashire. But I know sailors. Leave it to me."

WARD, Voogdt and myself all joined in trying to persuade her to do nothing, but she wouldn't promise, and when we broke up that night she left us uneasy, wondering what on earth she meant to do next—a not uncommon frame of mind among that young woman's acquaintance.

When we got outside the hotel I went for Voogdt.

"You're not playing the game, Austin," I told him.

"Guilty. I admit it," said he. "But look at the thing dispassionately, Jem. Isn't the Winter trade risky at best?"

"Granted. But——"

"You grant it. Well, this is an extra risk for which 'Kiah'll get extra pay," said he. "If you sack him, what happens?—to him, I mean. He'll go home, and idle, and grumble, and slack about with his cronies, and his family'll live on him till salmon-time comes. Then he'll go out in the boats every day, and get drunk with the other men every night until the season's over, and then he'll want another job. By that time he'll be no better off than when you first took him on. Better keep him on board, even with the extra risk, for his own sake."

"You'd argue black was white, if it suited your purpose," I said doubtfully.

"Not in this case, for I think as much of the man as you do. But here's my own case, apart from 'Kiah's interests. If he's sacked, he'll chatter. You know he will. Then the Topsham boats'll take the tale to Exmouth; Exmouth'll tell it to Budleigh and Dawlish; and they'll talk about us in the drift-boats by night and over the crab-pots in the morning till in a month 'Kiah's grievance has been discussed in every pub and every port and every boat between Lyme Regis and the Start.

"Next time we go west, every eye on the coast'll be looking out for us, every tongue wagging about our business. And, I tell you straight, I don't mean to have this plum snatched away just as I'm getting it to my mouth. And there's another point which may appeal even to you."

"What's that?"

"Cheyne. How long could you stand having him aboard, think you? Here are we—you, 'Kiah and myself—a happy family. But with Cheyne—day and night——"

"Say no more," I said. "I give in. My principles won't stand that strain. But, mind, we must do the square thing by 'Kiah, behind his back. Those bonuses——"

"Of course we will," said Voogdt, and there the matter ended for the time being.

Next day Miss Brand came down to the *Luck and Charity* in the middle of the morning. Rance was gone, and 'Kiah was busy in the forecastle getting our midday meal. After a few words with us she went forward and sat down on the top of the companion-ladder, apparently discussing methods of cooking, by way of setting 'Kiah at his ease. Within half an hour she was down in the forecastle, sitting knees to nose before the stove, deep in conversation. Having occasion to go forward I confess I lingered by the hatch to listen, and as far as I could judge she was giving 'Kiah thrills up the back.

"And she was struck by a cyclone off the coast of Jamaica, and every soul aboard of her perished," I heard her say, her voice impressively low.

"An'—an' th' maid—th' young lady, I should say?" 'Kiah stammered.

"She went mad, and died in the asylum strapped up in a strait-waistcoat in a padded room. I've been told that her screams could be heard at the lodge-gates. Wasn't it pitiful, 'Kiah?"

"It was indeed, miss. An' that dream come to 'er three times?"

"Three nights following. Oh, I've heard of many such cases. Deep-sea sailors know these things. My uncle had the narrowest of escapes off Singapore, and my aunt—I've often heard her tell of it—she certainly had a warning——"

I went aft to where Voogdt was reeving a new main-sheet.

"What's she doing down there?" he asked.

"Frightening 'Kiah with ghost-stories, as far as I can make out."

"What a ready-witted hussy it is," he said, admiringly. "Not one of us would have thought of that. Bet you anything you like she scares him ashore."

"I'll bet she doesn't," I said.

I felt bound to stick up for 'Kiah, but I confess I was doubtful, for they're queer cattle, some of the men from the Devon waterside. Besides, I'd heard a quaver in

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his voice that was a testimony to Miss Brand's story-telling powers.

IN the end her plan had results none of us had anticipated. Though I suspected he was badly scared, 'Kiah stayed on without remark, which gave me a better opinion of his intelligence. But the evening we were due to sail, when the warps were cast off the *Luck and Charity* refused to move.

Her bows swung free of the wharf, but her stern was immovable and, try all we could, we were unable to shift her. We pushed and strained until we were nearly exhausted, and in the end had to give up the attempt. 'Kiah, questioned, suggested sulkily that we had been "overlooked," by which he meant bewitched; but low tide revealed a length of chain made fast round our rudder and lashed firmly to the piles of the wharf.

'Kiah at first denied all knowledge of it, but afterward broke down and confessed with tears that Miss Brand, having dreamed three times that we sailed on an evening tide and were drowned, he had taken this means of insuring a departure in the morning.

Voogdt choked and bolted below to hide his laughter and, though we had missed a tide, I could scarcely keep a straight face while I gave 'Kiah the slanging he deserved. He whimpered, wiping his eyes on his sleeve, and then went forward and got on with his work. I am positive that he considered he had saved our lives, and had been rather harshly treated in return for such a service.

However, we had no more bother of the same sort, and that was the last attempt to induce him to desert us.

CHAPTER XXII

WORRY

WITH Rance gone and Voogdt's insatiable curiosity allayed, we put to sea, partners now in the concern, with fairly bright prospects, and I naturally thought everything in future would be peaceable and pleasant. We had made all arrangements as definitely as was possible. The superfluous men and ships were to be paid off; and now that we were no longer working in the dark it seemed to me all we had to do was to make quick voyages and our fortunes at one and the same time.

True, the German menace, as Voogdt persisted in calling the competing firm, remained a puzzle, and we were unable to come to any agreement about them. Sitting in council, Cheyne insisted that they were *bona-fide* traders and pooh-poohed Voogdt's tale of the shooting.

"Can't blame you for being suspicious," he said. "This trade makes one suspicious, as I've found. But their explanation holds water as far as I can see. It was just an accident, only you were scared and made more of it."

"Fifty quid paid by a quay-lumper to a fo'castle-hand for an accident?" Voogdt sneered.

"Accident or no accident, I don't care," said Cheyne. "What I go by is my own observations. Five coasters have called down there and left cargoes, and not one of them has ballasted from there. On the other hand they've sent away two small barges loaded deep and flying the B swallow-tail—the red powder-flag. Rifles or no, you can't get away from that."

Even Voogdt was forced to admit that looked straight enough.

"But what are we to do?" he asked. "Are we to take no notice of them at all? —treat 'em as if they were just fools, or be on our guard against them? The syndicate's opinion, please."

Ward shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't profess to know anything about it," he said. "You three must settle this affair between yourselves."

"Miss Lavington?"

Miss Lavington agreed with Mr. Ward, but of course, Miss Brand had something to say.

"This running-down business—are you sure it was intentional and can you connect that with the shooting?"

"We can't connect the two attempts," Voogdt said. "But, intentional? Yes, I'll swear it was that."

She turned to me. "And you?" she demanded.

"They certainly cut down the dingey. I can't positively say more than that. But I think Voogdt's right, all the same."

"Then if they're not *bona-fide* traders and if they were behind that attempt, it won't do to regard them as fools, will it?"

"They're not fools, be sure of that, Miss

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Brand," Voogdt said. "I don't think they're traders any more than we are, but even if they are we must pay them the compliment of believing them intelligent. Our pretense of genuine trading must be kept up, if only for their benefit."

"I think so, too," said she, and I agreed.

The other two declined to interfere, so, though Cheyne sneered and talked of waste, it was decided that we must go on as before, shipping cargoes at a loss, but exercising all possible care to see the priceless ballast-consignments didn't go astray. The idea of those sharp-eyed, unscrupulous people at our very door worried me, I confess. But I couldn't see any way of avoiding them, and Voogdt had no suggestions to make, so we had no alternative but to keep a sharp lookout, get on with the work and —unless they molested us—make our fortunes, quick and easy.

There we were mistaken. The German firm didn't bother us again. We had our old happy family aboard. The suspicions and conjectures that used to worry us were all at rest. Winter was wearing on to Spring, and yet we found more worry as partners than ever we had as employees.

TO START with, we made a bad passage; foul weather all the way, and once arrived at Dartmouth my first experience of the syndicate's shore methods nearly worried me sick.

We had all our ballast out, lying on the quay—thirty-five tons of it, worth a good eight thousand pounds—and were moored off in midstream waiting for tide, when I saw a laborer come down with a horse and cart and start loading up with the mud. I'd had two days of fidgeting at every pore every time a child walked over the heap, and this sent me into a cold perspiration.

"See that?" I said to Voogdt.

He nodded.

"We must put up with it," was all he said.

"I can't," I said. "I must go ashore and find out where that's going."

"Sit tight," said he. "You can't do anything. Grin and bear it."

"Man, he'll take away many hundredweights of the stuff."

"Half a ton, or thereabouts."

He tried to speak calmly.

"Over a hundred quid at a time. Ghastly, isn't it? But we must sit tight and put up with it. I'm beginning to feel sorry for our partners. They've stood this sort of thing for over a year."

"I can't stand it a single hour," I said. "I'm going ashore to find out who he is."

"I'll go," Voogdt said. "You'll make a mess of it, for certain. You're too much the simple sailor. Stay here, and I'll find out all I can."

He went ashore in our new dingey, returning half an hour later.

"He's working for a Salcombe farmer and has orders to take ten cartloads to Kingsbridge. He doesn't know what it's for, but fancies it's top-dressing for land."

"Oh, Lord!" I groaned. "Ten loads—five tons! Over a thousand pounds lying and spoiling on fields. I can't stand it, Austin."

"What are you going to do?" he asked, and posed me.

What could I do? Nothing—I could see that. I didn't dare meddle.

"I'll wire Cheyne," I said in desperation. It was the only thing I could think of.

"Not from here. If you must wire, go to Newton Abbot or Plymouth, and be guarded in your message. You mustn't forget this may be all right. This chap may be working for some agent of ours."

There was no confidence in his voice and speaking for myself I couldn't believe such a thing possible, so I went to Newton Abbot that afternoon and wired Cheyne.

"*Ten tons goods being removed to K. Instruct,*" was the message. I didn't dare give the name Kingsbridge in full.

No answer arrived till next morning and then it came from Birmingham. "*K on rail quite correct. Carwithen,*" it ran, and we both heaved sighs of relief.

Before we sailed again other carts had taken up the good work, and thirty tons had vanished into the interior of the county. But, as Voogdt pointed out, it was a useful lesson in self-control. I thought of Ward's story of the navvies and the quay-extension and wondered whether I should ever attain that much command of myself.

It's a queer business, having to sit still and see thousands of pounds' worth of your own property being taken away from under your nose in broad daylight, not knowing whether it's going into your pockets or going to waste, and unable to say a word or stretch out a finger to help it in the right direction.

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When we got back to Terneuzen we were told the *Olive Leaf* had been paid off and our next voyage was to Kirkcaldy, on the Firth of Forth. That meant new charts and a new voyage, and our first experience of the North Sea Winter trade made me regret the departed *Olive Leaf*, which had presumably got accustomed to it, as eels are said to get accustomed to skinning. It was bitterly cold, the weather had gone easterly with the approach of March and when next we got back to Terneuzen we both reviled Cheyne heartily. Why couldn't he keep us in the Channel till warmer weather? we demanded, and he grinned and said he'd do his best.

I must say he seemed to improve under the new circumstances, and I began to forgive the chap for any little past unpleasantness. Voogdt was more than affable to him. They drank together like brothers and were in each other's pockets half the time we were ashore. In fact they were so much together that I felt rather out in the cold at times, and a little inclined to resent it.

OUR first two voyages were almost entirely successful. Deducting 'Kiah's bonuses, which we had placed to his credit without his knowledge, Voogdt and myself reckoned ourselves richer by fifteen hundred pounds apiece; but after those two trips we hit a streak of bad luck. Out of three loads deposited in Channel ports, only fifteen tons came to hand, which, divided into six shares, made six hundred pounds apiece. With 'Kiah's bonus deducted—a quarter of our joint share—that left us each two hundred and twenty-five pounds.

A hundred and twelve pounds a voyage was very good pay, past denial, but after our first two voyages we were rather inclined to turn up our noses at it.

Our payments were as unbusinesslike as our methods of trading. Sometimes we asked Cheyne for money, and found he would advance up to a hundred pounds without remark. The larger sums were sent us in all sorts of currency—postal money-orders, bank-notes, sometimes gold packed in strong boxes—delivered by registered post at the ports where we touched.

The money-orders were sent in different names, and we were advised by Carwithen as to the offices we were to cash them at and what names we were to sign on them. I didn't care for such methods; the false names displeased me, for one thing; but I believe Voogdt positively enjoyed it.

"I wish I was at the head office," he said once in Southampton Water. "This game of hiding one's tracks appeals to me."

"It doesn't to me," I said shortly.

I'd just had no end of a bother trying to cash a money-order inland, at Salisbury. Carwithen had instructed me to apply in the name of Collings. I spelled the name Collins, and it took me a long hour to get the money, the fool behind the counter fencing with me, playfully assuming that I couldn't spell my own name. I couldn't very well tell him it wasn't my own, either.

Voogdt laughed.

"How much was it for?" he asked.

"A hundred and seventy. Rotten, potty, silly methods. I shall ask for mine to be banked for me in Birmingham in future."

I wrote Ward that night, and from that time left all the handling of my money to him—only drawing from Cheyne as occasion required. Voogdt approved when I told him what I had done.

"Ward's all right," he said. "But don't trust Cheyne in the same way."

"I thought you liked him," I said, rather surprised.

"H'm! Perhaps I do — fairly well. Whether I do or not, I want him to think so. I like him as well as one wolf likes another in the pack. We hunt together, but he'd eat me—or I him—if other quarry failed. Somebody must keep in with him, you chump. Don't you see that in all this muddle and grab he holds the reins? What's to prevent his doing the lot of us in the eye, if he likes to ship the stuff away when we aren't there? I mean to go on loving him. Then if he tries any little games he may invite my help."

"And I thought you had taken to the chap!" I said. "D'ye think he'll try it on?"

"You never know. No harm in being hand in glove with him for the present, anyhow."

CHAPTER XXIII

A SCARE AND A CROOK

ABOUT the middle of March we had a bad scare. We had learned from Ward that our continued shipments had not been without some effect on the tungsten

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market. He told us that he was now getting from ten to fifteen pounds a ton less than when the syndicate began operations, and warned us that a number of cargoes successfully delivered would in all probability cause a further drop in price. Voogdt said that couldn't be helped. Our holding was too precarious for us to attempt maintaining a demand.

"Thieves are forced to sell in a bad market," he said. "I've always had a sneaking sympathy with burglars, when I've reflected how the fences swindle them. We must just sell as fast as we can for the best price we can get."

Naturally we looked at the market-reports anxiously every time we were ashore and, landing at Southampton in the second week of March, found tungsten had come down with a rush to a bare two hundred pounds a ton. There was a further announcement that wolframite had been discovered in paying quantities in the refuse of an exhausted tin-mine in Cornwall.

"Game's up," I said.

Voogdt shook his head. "Don't worry. It'll pay us well at less than two hundred a ton. This is only a flash in the pan. If there'd been any promise of a constant supply it would have gone lower than that."

A letter he had received from Ward with supplies made a brief veiled reference to "recent discoveries," but as far as I could make out neither Ward nor Carwithen appeared to take the matter seriously. Cheyne, however, was in a lather when we got back to Terneuzen.

"Game's up," he said, using my very words.

"Looks pretty bad, doesn't it?" said Voogdt, teasing him, I thought. Cheyne cursed and grumbled and swore, and ended by asking us both to dinner. We accepted, but when we had gone ashore Voogdt suggested I should stay aboard.

"I'll grub with him by myself, if you don't mind. If he's going to start stealing, this is where he'll begin. If I'm alone he may give me a clue to his intentions. If you're there, he won't. He pays me the compliment of thinking me a rogue, and you've already had the sack once for your transparent honesty, don't you see? So you stay aboard and keep anchor-watch, Jem. I'll tell all necessary lies on your behalf."

He got back after midnight, and before he opened his mouth I could see that something had upset him.

"I knew he would. I knew he would!" he said. "The sweep! He wants us to split a cargo, leaving the better half at a port not yet decided on, and report to Ward that we've had an accident and had to jettison the stuff. Not a bad scheme, either. I confess I admire his ingenuity."

"And that sweep is to marry Pamela Brand!" I said.

"O-ho!" said Voogdt. "Is that the way the land lies? He wants us to dirty our hands by thieving for him, and little, long-tongued Brand is the first thing you think of. Sweet on her?"

"Certainly not," I said, rather hot about it. "The girl's nothing to me. In fact, I don't like her—much. But she's straight—straight as a line—and 'tisn't fair to marry her to a swab like that."

"Never mind about her just now. The question is, what are we going to do?"

"Give him the hammering he deserves and then write and inform Ward."

"Have a holy row, in fact. Kick Cheyne out; bust the show and see tungsten quoted at fifteen pounds a ton or thereabouts next time we get ashore. Sorry to disappoint you, but that won't do, Jem. Telling Ward's all right. I'll do that myself. But we can't afford a Row Royal. Cheyne must be induced to leave the sales to me and we must just keep another banking-account."

"Can we do that?" I asked.

"We'll manage it that way or some other. We can *not* afford a row at any cost. Remember that, whatever you do. We must keep this beast sweet; help him, even; and just report each move to headquarters. Ward knows you're straight, at all events."

CHEYNE came aboard next morning, Voogdt meeting him at the gangway. They both went down into the cabin at once and then called me through the skylight.

"I've told Cheyne you're all square," Voogdt explained when I entered.

I said nothing, but Cheyne seemed not to notice my manner.

"No good paying out six shares when we can make it three, is it?" he asked.

I grunted some sort of an agreement. More I couldn't do, for it was all I could manage to keep my hands off him. But it seemed to satisfy him, and he and Voogdt

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began to explain what he wanted done.

Our next voyage would be to Swanage, and we were to put into Newhaven on the way and discharge twenty tons. He wanted us to cable him, but Voogdt had said that meant complications and insisted on wiring the customer himself. Cheyne jibbed a little, but he had no choice, and so gave Voogdt the name of one of Ward's customers whom he knew personally, and agreed that Voogdt should communicate with him direct. As far as I could make out, the whole thing had been planned beforehand between him and this customer, who must have been another rogue of the same sort, and they had only been waiting their opportunity.

I said nothing; sat like a dummy and grunted "yes" or "no." My fingers were itching to get at the beast, and I didn't try to be civil. At last even he saw it, dense as he was, and soon after took his leave, Voogdt going on deck to see him off.

"Is he all right?" I heard him ask—the skylight being a little open.

"As straight as a line," Voogdt reassured him. "He's a bit sulky because he's been trying to persuade me he ought to have a half-share instead of a third, that's all."

"What's he want that for?"

"He says it's his ship. Of course, I told him we couldn't do it, and equally of course he daren't make a fuss any more than the rest of us."

"Good enough," said Cheyne. "If he shows signs of being nasty, promise him a bonus. We can manage that, I dare say," and off he went.

"You must try and disguise your feelings a bit," Voogdt said, when he came below. "He's been asking if you were to be relied on."

"I heard him. Faugh, the swine! He, to ask whether another man is to be relied on! He, that's cheating women, and his own relations at that."

"That thinks he's going to cheat them, you mean," said Voogdt, with a grin. "Come, man; put a more cheerful face on it. Think of him here counting his chickens, and Ward, with that wooden face of his, hatching the eggs in Brummagem for all of us. We can work it well. See now: We land the stuff, advise Ward by code wire and depart. From the next port we advise Cheyne's customer, who swoops down on his prey, to find it gone. Having arranged for cartage and so on, he'll talk to Cheyne like a Dutch uncle. Cheyne can't explain it, nor can we. It's just another cargo gone wrong, that's all. Here's Cheyne at one end, slaving away to get the stuff off, and Ward at the other disposing of it."

He drew such a funny picture of Cheyne's rage at his disappearing cargoes that even I was bound to laugh, and after that it was no good holding out against the arrangement. But I wrote Ward that night, exposing the whole business, and next day we started loading the stuff Master Cheyne already regarded as his own.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BEFOOLING OF THE CROOK

AT HER best no one could ever have mistaken the *Luck and Charity* for a yacht. She was too heavily built for that; but the first two years I had her she looked a cut above the every-day coasting-ketch. She was new then. I was able to keep her clean, her decks scrubbed and her brasswork polished, and to indulge her with some little vanities, such as take a sailor's eye. Her clumsy tiller was abolished, for instance, and replaced with a neat mahogany wheel; there were white gratings for the steersman's feet; the compass stood in a binnacle of bright brass and mahogany and awnings hung from the booms in port.

But by now her chipped and clay-stained wheel, with all its brass and woodwork scratched and tarnished, was the only trace remaining of her man-millinery. That starvation Winter in Exmouth had swallowed everything salable, and working up and down the Channel ever since had accounted for the rest.

The gratings had gone. All that was left of the awnings was a patch or two in the stained canvas of her sails. A ring of screw-holes on the dirty deck showed where the polished binnacle had stood, and we steered now by a clumsy floating compass of antiquated design clamped upon the after end of the skylight. Her once spotless decks were filthy with trampled mud and coal, her brass fittings had given place to galvanized iron and neatness and lightness in her appliances had been replaced everywhere by clumsy strength.

And yet, soiled and weathered as she was,

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I think I liked her better now than ever I had done in the days of her prosperity. She was built for rough work; shining brass and white awnings were never her proper wear. Like most men and some women, she looked better in her working-dress, aproned and bare-armed, than in any ballroom rig. The more I looked at her the more I liked her, and when Voogdt came up to relieve me at midday I spoke my thoughts.

"A dear, good old packet she is," I said. "Honest as a woman. It's a shame she should be put to dirty work like stealing for Cheyne."

"How many more times am I to tell you she is not stealing for Cheyne, thou puddinghead?" he demanded. "You and your 'honest as a woman'! There speaks the simple sailor."

"I don't want to think otherwise of women," I said. "I've met 'em all over the world, good and bad, and there's good in the worst of 'em. D'you think any woman would have thought out a dirty, treacherous game like this scheme of Cheyne's?"

"P'raps not. I don't know. Lord forbid that I should shake your faith in woman, lovely woman, even if you do express it like a Surrey-side melodrama. I don't think women'll ever hurt *you* much, at all events. Give us the wheel. East by nor', half east, is it?"

"East by nor', half east," I repeated mechanically, and then, not feeling sleepy, filled a pipe and sat down on the skylight for a chat.

It was a fine day, not too cold, and the breeze being well behind us it was pleasant on deck. The cruel Winter was nearly over, I was making money and things generally looked more cheerful—but for this Cheyne business. That soured me. I couldn't keep it out of my mind, and before my pipe was well alight we were discussing it all over again.

Voogdt, like myself, had written Ward before we sailed, and pitched the letter across the cabin table for me to read before he sealed it. It was a brief, concise report, such as only a skilled penman could write, with nothing to confuse the reader and nothing omitted. Even I, knowing the whole business as I did, felt I had a clearer notion of it all after reading his description. My letter, written in the heat of temper, had been full of abuse of Cheyne, yet somehow Voogdt's simple statement, extracting the gist of all he had said, point after point, seemed to show him more clearly as a rogue than all my adjectives had done.

He laid the whole thing before Ward, enclosed a short list of code-words he'd drawn up so ingeniously that it seemed to me they provided for every contingency and also enclosed—a thing I had forgotten in my haste—the name and address of Cheyne's customer. He said the deal was "possibly prearranged"—hit off in two words what I had taken half a page to say. The concluding paragraph made me chuckle:

> To avoid alarming Mr. Cheyne, I suggest that consignments misdirected by his order be divided into five shares instead of six. Should he find himself credited with a share in goods he believes lost, he may get confused and be unable to discharge his duties as efficiently as heretofore.

I chuckled as I remembered it.

"Think Ward'll have a plan ready?" I asked.

"If he's the man I think him, he will. He'll have to do that double-entry business we spoke of. 'Oh! what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive.' Who would have thought we were in for such an interesting business that day you took me aboard at Exmouth?"

"It's a bit too interesting at times."

"Rot! It's the risk makes the sport. Half the time we're working in the dark. Look at these German people, for instance. We don't know what they're up to; they may shoot us or run us down or blow the company's sheds sky high any day, for aught we know. Any one of a hundred chances may wreck our plans: a row with Cheyne; an astute man watching the markets; another tramp like myself suffering from curiosity.

"The business was only founded on an accident, mind you—a half-drunk sailor dropping his watch. Interesting? I should jolly well think it was. I'm not one of your placid breed. I believe you'd rather be selling things over a counter, or trading regularly from port to port or drawing a settled income. Not me, Jem. Life's a gamble at best, and though you safe players may leave the table with most of the counters, I swear you don't get most of the fun."

"I'm certainly not getting much fun out of this so far," I said. "Three bad voyages on end, Cheyne a rogue and our never knowing what these Germans may be up to

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any minute. I don't like it. I can't be civil to one and watch another and keep different accounts going in my head all at the same time. Acting a part before this rascal and that——"

"Pooh! The salt of life," Voogdt interrupted. "That's what makes life worth the living. How sweet this old boat steers before a wind. On that one point I agree with you, anyhow; she's a good homely ship, and I've grown fond of her, too. When we've made our pile I'll buy her off you and titivate her with paint and varnish and keep her for a yacht."

"No, you won't. She's mine, and I'm going to keep her. I bought her new, I saw her rigged and launched and I'll stick to her like a man to his wife till one or other of us is worn out."

"More Surrey-side melodrama," said he. "James, your sentiments are truly British —nautical British drama of the late Georgian period. Wherever you may be, by land or yet by sea, your heart is t-r-r-rue to Poll! And you express yourself in a manner that would draw rousing cheers from any gallery. I'd like to throw orange-peel at you, myself!"

WE HELD the breeze into Newhaven, making a quick voyage of it with no bother at all, but once in harbor our troubles began in earnest. The harbor-master, a slow-witted, distrustful South Saxon, led off by asking us, very properly, what was our business.

"Our orders is to get ballast out and be ready to load," said Voogdt incautiously, and the man went away.

"Now you've done it," I said. "D'you think we can leave half our ballast and take away the other half without exciting suspicions, after that?"

"We'll see. I'm sorry. Meanwhile, don't hurry about getting the stuff out of her."

He wrote Ward again that night, taking full responsiblity for his hasty answer, and next day we dawdled over our work until the harbor-master wanted to know if we'd bought the ballast-quay.

"There's others besides you," he said.

"We're in no 'urry, guv'nor," Voogdt said placidly. "We ain't got our orders yet. If anybody wants to ballast they can lay outside so's we can discharge into 'em direct."

Naturally neither of us thought the offer would be accepted, but it was. There might have been twelve tons out on the quay, when another coaster, the *Teresa* of Waterford, warped alongside us in the afternoon. We started emptying our tubs into her hold perforce, but our pace wasn't fast enough for her owner, Irish though he was.

"Talk o' th' Irish bein' lazy!" he said with supreme contempt, after watching us for an hour. "Sure, fleas won't bite a South Dev'n man, thinkin' th' poor fella's dead. 'Nless he's in a hurry, an' then they shwarm on 'm, perceiving he's only asleep. Here, Byrne an' Lar'nce, jump aboard that floatin' rest-cure an' show them dead slugs how t' shift ballast."

"You keep your men off my decks," I said.

"Pho! Sure, ye can take up the cyarpets before they come aboard. You, an' y'r decks! D'ye think my men are dirrtier than y'r —— plankin'?"

"We don't want your Irish fleas coming aboard to be disappointed," said Voogdt. "If you don't like our pace, get out in midstream again and wait your turn at the quay. We don't get extra pay for loading you."

"I tho't ye did, the way ye're flyin' at it. Howly Saints! I believe I'd get ballasted quicker on the moorin's with the weeds that'd grow on our bottom."

The altercation brought the harbor-master round to us once more and the Irishman appealed to him. Fortunately the ancient hatred of Celt and Saxon served us.

"First come, first served," said he stolidly. "They was here first. If you don't like their ways you must wait your turn."

"This is a useful way of escaping notice," I said to Voogdt when we got a minute alone in the cabin. "And the ballast is being lost, too. Got any further complications up your sleeve?"

"Don't worry. Smile," said he. "Ward'll be here to-night, and I rather fancy I see trouble for Cheyne in this."

"I see more trouble for us," I said. "There's a hundred quid thrown away every time a tub's emptied into that Irishman's hold, work as slowly as we will."

"Don't worry, I tell you. Wait for Ward. This'll be a coup, or I'm mistaken."

WARD arrived that night, and sure enough they managed it between them. Next day he passed the word that we could ballast the *Teresa* as fast as

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we pleased. She was bound for Neath Abbey to load coal, and Carwithen was already arranging to remove the ballast on her arrival. For ourselves, we were to empty our hold, load with a cargo of deals Ward had bought and take them to Swanage instead of the ballast as originally arranged. He had chartered another coaster lying in harbor, and instructed Carwithen to arrange a coal cargo for her at Jarrow-on-Tyne, where she would take the ballast we had already thrown out on the quay.

"But what about Cheyne? He'll ask questions."

"Let him," said Voogdt, and Ward's post-office mouth quivered a little at the corners. "With half the cargo at Jarrow and half at Neath Abbey, let him ask all the questions he pleases."

"But what about the sixth-share of the lot we were to have landed at Swanage? He'll want to know about that."

"We'll credit him with that," said Ward.

"Suppose he hears we went there with deals?"

"He won't hear of it in the ordinary way, and I don't think he'll dare ask questions. If he does, he can only learn that you've discharged half your ballast on the quay, and that another coaster took it. That's happened to us many times before. He won't suspect anything from that."

"What do you think of Cheyne?" I asked.

"I'm very sorry for the whole business. I thought better of him. It's very fortunate you two are partners with us."

"You put your opinion of him mildly! Now let me get this business straight in my head. When Cheyne asks questions, what am I to say?"

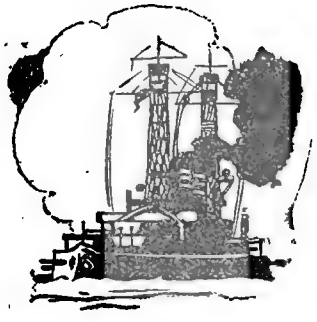
"Say you discharged about eighteen tons here and sailed for Swanage. That's all you need bother about."

"A few more attempts like this and we shall make a slip and give the show away."

"It's more than possible," Ward said. "But obviously I can't interfere. The remedy lies in your own hands. If you persuade Cheyne of the risk and difficulty, perhaps he won't try it again."

"And perhaps he will—perhaps he'll try lots of curious things," said Voogdt.

TO BE CONTINUED



U. S. S. HO-HAITCH-TEN

CHIEF-GUNNER STAPLES of the United States Navy vouches for the truth of the following story. The incident took place during the fleet's recent cruise around the world, at a time when several of the ships were taking on coal alongside the wharf in Yokohama.

A seaman from a British battleship hired a rowboat, and sculled himself among the American ships to take a closer look at them. Before starting on his cruise he absorbed some rather liberal samples of the wine of the country, and his thinking-apparatus was consequently a little out of gear. As he passed close under the *Ohio* he looked up and saw her name painted in gold letters on her stern.

"A Ho an' a Haitch an' a Ten!" he remarked. "I wonder what in —— that spells!"

Then he rowed out into the harbor a stroke or two to get a better view.

"Lord love and look at her!" he murmured. "What'll the Ho-Haitch-Eleven look like, if that's the Ho-Haitch-Ten!"

He became so absorbed in the problem that when he at last got back to his own ship he was imprisoned in the brig for overstaying shore-leave.——*Walter Galt.*

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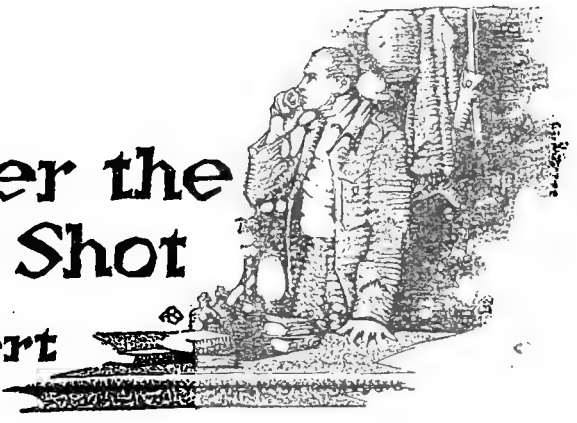

After the Last Shot

by W. Robert Foran

"HULLO! This is Eliot at the police station. Who's that speaking? That you, Ewart?"

Jack Henry Eliot, District Commissioner of Police at Nairobi, clutched the receiver more firmly as he recognized the voice of his commanding officer, Raymond Ewart.

The voice of his superior displayed marked agitation as he rapped out his commands over the telephone in short, snappy sentences.

"Two white drunks have been shooting up the bar at Rainey's in Government Road," came the startling information to Eliot's expectant ear. "Tried to shoot the native police who were called in to arrest them. Take a couple of men with you, Eliot, and hurry down there. Arrest them on sight. I'll be down at the station to meet you on your return with the prisoners. Look sharp about the job, now."

"Right, you are! On my way now, Ewart."

Eliot hung up the receiver hastily, seized his belt with revolver attached and yelled for the native sergeant of the guard. The sharp patter of running feet sounded outside on the veranda of the police station, and the tall figure of the khaki-clad police sergeant stood outlined in the doorway, saluting Eliot stiffly with his right hand.

"*Hapa effendi*" (here, sir), he gravely announced.

"Mohammed, bring a constable with you and follow me at once. Don't bring any arms, for you won't want them. Look alive now!"

Eliot led the way from the station-office at the double, fastening his belt as he ran. The native sergeant and constable ran silently at his heels. They had no thought to ask what their mission was. It was sufficient that their officer ordered; they were there to obey in all things. The British Army drill-sergeants had not wasted their ceaseless toil in a tropical sun to make these black savages into disciplined soldiers.

Eliot was thinking rapidly as he ran toward Rainey's bar, through the Indian bazaar with its corrugated-iron stores and seething mass of Indian and native humanity. He had only recently been appointed to the East African Police, after seeing considerable service as an officer in the British army. He found that the meager pay of an infantry lieutenant, augmented by his own slender private income, was not sufficient for him to support the lady of his choice.

Therefore he had applied for service under the Colonial Office. He hoped thus for chances of distinguishing himself and thereby bettering his position. But all his hopes had come to naught so far. He had asked to be stationed at an outlying post, thinking this would offer greater opportunities. But, to his disgust, he had been posted to Nairobi, the capital town. He was deeply chagrined by the hope of adventure dwindling from his horizon of desires.

But this looked like a possible chance for making a name for himself, and promotion might then quickly follow. He would not be to blame, he assured himself, if he let this or any other opportunity escape him.

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WITH this thought uppermost in his mind, he arrived outside Rainey's bar. He curtly ordered the two native police to stand on guard outside of the barroom and to allow nobody to enter or leave the premises. His face was aglow with excitement, for this was his first real case since he had joined the police, and he was ripe for adventure.

He loosened the clasp of his revolver-holster, and stepped resolutely into the barroom. He was without fear of the two roughs inside, and felt confident that he could make their arrest without any difficulty. But he was to be sadly disillusioned. A more experienced police officer would have drawn his revolver ready for use before entering the room.

As the door swung close behind him, he looked sharply over the room. He was not going to be caught napping, if he could help it. The smashed bottles on the floor and bar-counter, the broken furniture, lamps and windows told their own tale of the havoc wrought by two drink-excited fanatics. The room was empty except for the two rough-looking white men leaning against the bar. They eyed the intruder with looks of utter disdain; and Eliot gave them back look for look.

He was not yet aware of the manner of men he was encountering; but he was soon to learn.

Eliot had taken only two paces into the room, which was as silent as the grave, when he suddenly found himself looking into the barrels of two revolvers.

"Stand where you are and don't move if you value your skin," came the quiet command from the larger of the two men.

Eliot smiled grimly and obeyed. He could have kicked himself for being such a fool as to let these men get the drop on him. If he had not been so excited and cocksure of success he would not have been so rash as to enter the room empty-handed. But it was too late for vain regrets now. He must make the best of a bad situation and seize the first chance that offered to turn the tables on the two men.

"What d' you want?" the larger man inquired insolently; and there was an ugly menace in his tone.

"I have come for you two men," quietly answered Eliot, and he never let his eyes flinch from the faces of his two ugly adversaries. "Will you come quietly, or shall I have to call for assistance?"

As he spoke, he slid his hand carelessly toward his revolver-holster.

But the two men were quick to perceive his intention and were ready to checkmate it.

"PUT your hands up," came the abrupt command. There was no mistaking the look in the big man's eyes. Eliot raised his hands slowly above his head. But still he smiled sweetly; and there was a threat behind the smile, if the men had been readers of faces.

The larger man, who appeared to be the leader, inspected the officer intently. Eliot was a young man for his position of responsibility, at most but five-and-twenty. He was fully six feet in height, and his shoulders betrayed unusual strength. His sunburnt face showed force of character, and the supple grace of his movements evidenced an effective athletic-training. His eyes had an indomitable look, which boded ill for any one who should be foolhardy enough to test the temper or courage of their owner. In his school-days, Jack Eliot's name had been synonymous with all that was excellence in every branch of sport; and he had never allowed himself to get out of training.

He shrugged his shoulders as the two men continued their scrutiny.

"What have you two men been up to?" he asked curtly, with an air of authority.

"What has that got to do with you, I'd like to know?" asked the shorter of the two men, who was plainly angered by the lack of appreciation of the two guns shown by Eliot.

"Everything in the world," snapped Eliot through compressed lips. "I shall have to arrest you both for assaulting a police officer in the execution of his duty."

The two gunmen laughed outright. Arrest them when they had the youngster in their power? It was a joke.

"You may laugh now, but you'll change your tune presently. Come, I've had enough of this fooling," he continued, ignoring the laugh.

"Seem to think this a joke, don't you? We'll mighty soon show you it isn't, my fine young fellow," the smaller man sneered evilly.

Eliot let the remark go by with a shrug of his shoulders, not deigning to notice it with anything more than complete contempt.

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He was thinking hard and studying the men before him. Somewhere he had seen these two faces before; but where it had been he was at a loss to remember. The strong build of the larger man, his mass of black hair, thick and unkempt, his heavy features and generally evil face seemed strangely familiar, but as yet he could not give him a name. There was a deep, white scar running across the left cheek from eye to mouth. This mark was also familiar, but where, when or how he had seen it before he did not know. The smaller man had the brutal face of a typical criminal. His hands were large and red, his irregularly featured face was covered with a week's growth of red beard, and his small eyes gleamed, ferocious and wild, from beneath bushy red eyebrows.

Yes, both faces were known to him, but in what connection Eliot could not remember.

His meditations were cut short by the determined voice of the smaller man, who began to advance slowly across the room to where Eliot was standing.

"I'm going to count three, and then you'd better get out of here or I'll shoot," he remarked vindictively.

Still the youngster did not flinch. And, suddenly, his face brightened. This man had a decided and peculiar limp, and walked as if he had a badly mended fractured hip-joint. Now, Eliot knew his men. In a flash the knowledge came to him.

Only three days previously he had been killing an idle hour in his office by looking over some old files of "Men Wanted" by the South African Police. How stupid of him to forget, he thought. Here before him were two of the worst characters in South Africa—men badly wanted by the law in all corners of the world. The Johannesburg police had sent out far and wide full descriptions of these two men, who were sought for a series of daring burglaries, culminating in a particularly brutal murder of an inoffensive old lady.

And Eliot smiled happily as he remembered that a reward was offered for their capture, amounting to the respectable and comforting figure of £1,000 a head.

He was delighted at the chance which was now offered him. Here was an opportunity to win his spurs, and, incidentally, so to increase his bank-account as to make feasible the marriage he had so long contemplated.

Still the murderer advanced with the utmost deliberation. Eliot stood his ground with a face lacking fear. He was warily watching the two men, waiting for the counting of the fatal three, for neither man had begun to count. Eliot was rapidly thinking out a plan of action, but as yet was undecided what to do.

It was true he might call to the policemen outside of the bar for aid, and take a chance of them getting to him in time to be of assistance. But he knew that these two men before him were desperate characters and would not hesitate to shoot to kill, if he dared to give the alarm. This plan, therefore, was out of the question, for Eliot had no desire to be shot. Besides he wanted all the glory of the capture for himself; and the reward of £2,000 was not one to be given up lightly or shared with others.

The red-haired man had approached now to within arm's length of Eliot, and the other man was leaning negligently on the bar-counter with his revolver covering the police official. There was a cynical and brutal smile on his face; and Eliot inwardly shivered.

He decided to parley with the men. He wanted more time to think, and to act, if there was an opportunity given to him.

"WHAT game are you two men playing?" he asked calmly, and his voice sounded very innocent of guile. "Looks to me like a game of blind-man's buff, but those two dangerous looking revolvers aren't appetizing at all."

"Blindman's buff, you call it, do you?" laughed the big man at the bar-counter, and he straightened himself with an ugly leer. "Well, I'll be hanged if you're not a cool one. Look here, kid, we don't want to hurt you, and so get out of here before blood is spilled. See?"

"That's just what I don't see," Eliot assured him quietly. "I've been sent down here to arrest you both for being drunk and disorderly, and for shooting at one of my native police constables. Unless you come quietly, I'll have to use force. I'd rather not do so, as it will make it all the worse for you. Will you surrender or shall I have to take you?"

Eliot grinned good-naturedly at the two husky murderers. His face was as innocent as a child's. The two ruffians were plainly puzzled by his attitude, and a gleam of

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hope began to rise in the boy's breast. There was a chance that he might outwit them yet, if he could only play for time.

The silence was getting on his nerves, and he could feel the perspiration trickling down his back and face.

"Time's up," he announced decisively. "I've got to hurry back to the police station, or my chief will be sending more men down here. Are you coming?"

There was authority in his voice, but still his hands remained above his head. The revolvers looked too much like business to take any liberties with them.

"By Gad, youngster, what ails you?" the big man asked gruffly; but there was an unwilling note of admiration in his voice. He liked the lad's pluck and was grudgingly forced to admit it. "Now quit this fooling and get out. We've played long enough, and we don't intend to go to any lockup. See? We're on a spree and intend to finish it without any interference."

Eliot grinned back at them and studied their faces closely. He was beginning to see daylight in a plan now, and his confidence in his own abilities to bring the issue to a successful conclusion had not abated.

"I, too, have played long enough, thanks," he replied drearily. "You can't think how foolish a man feels to have two empty guns held at his head. It's been a good game of bluff, but time's up, gentlemen. You're my prisoners."

He took a step forward as he finished speaking.

"Stand where you are, you young fool," thundered the two men in unison. "We'll shoot, as sure as God made little apples, if you take another step," the large man added, fiercely.

Eliot halted. The two revolvers spoke more plainly than words.

"All the same, you're my prisoners," the boy averred grimly, and there was a set look in his face which angered the larger man.

"What's that?" he roared, taking a couple of steps forward in his rage. "Your prisoners? It's about time you regained your senses. Unloaded guns, indeed! Bah!" There was supreme contempt in his voice. "I'll show you if they're loaded or not."

He raised his weapon swiftly and pointed it at a bottle which stood, cracked and empty from a previous tumble, on the far end of the bar-counter.

There was a flash and a sharp report; and the bottle became a thousand shimmering pieces of glass. Again the revolver spoke, and a bottle on the shelf behind the bar fell to the ground in fragments.

"Oh! pretty shooting, sir!" Eliot's voice was full of admiration and his eyes twinkled in enthusiasm. "By Jove! Those were two corking good shots!"

"Glad you liked them, young man." The expert shot smiled serenely and fairly beamed with pride in his own skill. "That's nothing to what I can do, though. Learned to shoot any old style out in Texas some twenty years ago. Knocked round the world a bit since then, and I've learned a few more tricks."

Eliot expressed polite interest and asked to be shown more evidences of the man's prowess. The large man was plainly flattered, and Eliot began to feel more comfortable. Things were going the way he wanted them to go. His long-awaited chance was nearly within his grasp, now.

The large man consented with a little persuasion to display his skill. The smaller man was still covering Eliot with his revolver. If only he could persuade them both to compete in revolver-contests, he might yet get a chance to use his own weapon.

The big man walked leisurely across the room and wheeled. He took quick aim at Eliot's head. The flash and report came simultaneously. The boy never moved, but his face twitched slightly. He was holding himself well in hand, but the strain was almost beyond his endurance. He felt a blow at the top of his helmet, very slight but sufficient to signify that a bullet had passed through it.

"Take your helmet off, but keep your hands up," the large man ordered. Eliot obeyed without speaking.

The ventilation cap at the top of his khaki helmet had been shot off by the bullet.

"By Jove!" Eliot exclaimed enthusiastically, as he examined the course of the shot. "What a great shot! You ought to go into vaudeville. You'd make a fortune. But, I say, you might have saved me a tailor's bill if you had selected some other mark. You've ruined a perfectly new helmet."

The two men laughed at the woful face which Eliot made. What a fool this boy must be, they thought, not to see that they

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were in deadly earnest and would not be arrested.

"Please choose something else, next time," Eliot pleaded.

"Just as you please," the marksman assented suavely. "Gentlemen, we will now demonstrate our ability to shoot a light off a match-head."

He walked slowly back to the bar and placed a match end-on in a cork. This he inserted in a bottle and stood it upon the counter, lighting the match. With calm deliberation he paced back to the far end of the room.

WHILE these preparations were in progress Eliot was straining every nerve to listen for his men outside. He could hear nothing and concluded they must have gone for aid on hearing the first shot. He was glad they had deserted him, for he felt sure, now, that he could capture the two men unaided.

Again there was a flash and a report. The match was extinguished, but otherwise the mark was untouched.

The smaller man sneered. Still covering Eliot, he backed over to the bar-counter. Eliot's face plainly showed his relief at the move. He knew he had them now. It wanted only a few minutes to play his two fish, and then he would land them high and dry in the cells.

"Cover the boy, Billy," commanded the red-haired man. And Billy obeyed sullenly. "Now, I'll show you a trick you can't do. Look at those eight bottles over there on the shelf. I'm going to shoot the corks off every one of them. Here goes!"

He raised his revolver quickly to the height of his hip, and six times in rapid succession the shots rang out. Six portions of cork fell off the bottles, and the walls splintered behind them. At the last shot, the big man forgot his prisoner. He wheeled swiftly and loosed off his revolver at the two remaining bottles.

"You've got nothing on me, Pat," he insisted.

The corks of these two bottles fell also, but one of the bottles tottered, and then fell with a crash to the floor.

"Hang it!" exclaimed the marksman. And the smaller man laughed aloud.

"Very clumsy," he sneered.

Eliot had not been slow to take advantage of his opportunity. As the big man fired his last shot, the boy's hand slipped swiftly to his revolver-butt. Stealthily he drew it out of the holster and covered the two unsuspecting men, who were oblivious to all but their keen sense of rivalry.

As the big man broke his revolver to reload, Eliot took a quick step toward the men.

"HANDS up!"

His voice was calm and serene, but there was excitement in his face. He knew he had won the unequal game with bluff. His mouth was grim with determination, but rivers of sweat were pouring down his face. The tension on his nerves had been tremendous.

At the sound of his threatening voice, the two men wheeled quickly to face this new menace. There was no mistaking the look in the boy's eyes. It would go ill with any one who tried to disobey him now. He had been played with too long to have any mercy or to take any chances. And the two murderers knew that they had to admit defeat.

Grudgingly, they raised their hands above their heads. Eliot advanced toward them, keeping them covered with his service revolver; and the boy's stride was full of confidence.

"I've waited for this chance, you two swine," he addressed them calmly. "I know you both, and that you're wanted badly in Johannesburg for murder. Don't attempt any tricks, or I'll shoot to kill. I've taken my medicine from you, and now you're going to get yours. Drop those revolvers!"

The command was uttered in a tone that was not to be denied. The two men searched his face for a second, but saw no softening in it. This was a man, not a foolish boy. How they had underestimated the man's qualities!

The two revolvers dropped heavily to the wooden floor of the barroom.

"Back up against the wall behind you," came the command. Silently, and with their hands above their heads, the two men did as they were ordered. Eliot followed, with his revolver still covering them.

"Look here, Captain, we've only been playing with you. Honest we have."

Eliot smiled grimly, as the smaller man whined out this lie.

"That so?" he answered serenely. "I'm only playing also, but for a cool £2,000

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reward offered for the arrest of Patrick Shannon and Billy Foster on a charge of murder."

"You've got the wrong pair, this time," the larger man insisted, but his face showed that he was in abject fear. "Never been in South Africa in our lives, honest we've not."

"You'll have a chance to explain later." Eliot's voice was abrupt.

"Don't be hard on two drunks. We've only been on a spree and you've got the wrong men."

The larger man began to lower his hands.

"Hold up those hands, —— you!"

Eliot's voice was menacing. The hands were raised again above the man's head.

Eliot raised his police whistle to his lips and blew a shrill note. He wanted assistance now, and he could afford to be generous. The reward was already won by his own individual efforts.

The last note of the whistle had scarcely died away when there came the sound of running feet outside in the street. The door burst open and Ewart doubled into the room at the head of a party of ten native police. He halted abruptly as he saw the grim picture of the two men backed against the wall with their hands above their heads, and Eliot covering them with his gun.

Eliot did not take his attention off the two prisoners.

"That you, Ewart?" he asked without looking around.

"Yes! Hope you're not hurt, old boy," was the swift reply from the senior Commissioner of Police. "Your sergeant and men came back with a report that you'd been killed. I was hurrying along the reserves when I heard your whistle. Who've you got there, Eliot?"

"Two pretty fine scoundrels badly wanted in South Africa for murder." Eliot's voice was triumphant. "You've seen the circulars with reference to Billy Foster and Patrick Shannon? Well, these are the two beauties."

"Great Scotland Yard!"

Ewart's exclamation was replete with astonishment.

"Here, two of you men," Eliot ordered.

Two of the native police jumped forward.

"Handcuff these two men. Look alive about it."

The steel manacles were quickly placed on the two cowering murderers. Eliot languidly returned his revolver to its holster.

"Take them to the police station and put them in separate cells," he drawled.

AS THE party reached the street, Foster looked over his shoulder at Eliot. His face was red with rage and there was murder in his eyes. Eliot smiled serenely back at him.

"I'll get even with you for this, you —— cub!" Foster shouted. "My pals will soon be on your trail, and you'll laugh on the other side of your face. No prison in this country can hold me. You see if I'm not speaking gospel truth. You'll get yours all right."

Eliot laughed outright.

"Yes, I'll get mine, all right!" he answered happily.

"What do you mean by that?" inquired Ewart, anxiously scanning Eliot's care-free face.

"£2,000 reward, that's all," he laughed. "Comes in mighty handy at this particular period," he added reflectively. "Think I'll send right away for the little wife-that-is-to-be. I can afford luxuries now, eh what?"

Ewart patted him on the back and congratulated him on his good fortune. But there was envy in his voice.

"Thanks, awfully, old chap. Yes, I think two thousand will come in very handy, for it's devilish lonely out here," Eliot said.

He sighed, but it was a sigh of utter contentment.

And the little bride-that-was-to-be, waiting anxiously in England for the day of their reunion, agreed with him that the money could be used—and used to good purpose.

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Brethren of the Coast

The First of the Buccaneers

by George Rothwell Brown

THE motley crowd of men straggling along the beach, talking excitedly in small groups, or sprawling listlessly under the palm-trees which grew almost to the waters' edge, were as desperate and wretched as any that might have been found in all Christendom. Fierce-looking fellows they were, shaggy and bearded, with matted hair falling around their shoulders, and faces that had been baked by the sun of the tropics.

Their eyes were fastened eagerly on a small Dutch fly-boat that was tacking into the harbor, where several vessels lay at anchor, under a fresh wind which presently brought it in so close that half a dozen of them, running down into the water, took hold of her and hauled her up. In the bow stood a tall, lean man, dressed in short blue breeches and a worn jerkin over a frayed and tattered yellow shirt. There were grimy ribbons fluttering at his cuffs and a red-silk rag of the same dusky shade at his throat.

He leaped ashore as the boat grounded and, going up the beach in quick, nervous strides, was greeted with a rousing cheer from the men as they trooped down to meet him. They crowded around, throwing their hats into the air and shouting a welcome in half a dozen languages. Plunging here and there among them, grasping one man by the hand and slapping another upon the back, firing a volley of questions right and left, asking as to arms, provisions, water, the ships, and snapping out orders that sent men flying to do his bidding, the tall, lean fellow, with the scarlet rag at his throat and the ribbons at his wrists, did not let them long forget that he was their Captain, and that important business awaited them.

L'OLONNAIS, THE PIRATE

A FRENCHMAN, Jean David Nau, by name, he was known only as "L'Olonnais," a *nom-de-guerre* bestowed upon him by his comrades because the sole fact about him that they knew was that he hailed from that part of the coast of France which is near the sands of Olonne. Taciturn, gloomy of mien, as secretive as all the rest of the human riffraff who were his associates, and who exchanged the secrets of their worthless lives with nobody, he had won his place of leadership by sheer deviltry.

His hair, long, black and straight, and parted in the middle to leave bold and commanding a broad forehead, fell to his shoulders in a greasy mat. His black eyes were set far apart, as if they had been pushed aside to make room for a huge hooked nose which dominated his angular and sallow face like a rocky promontory on a barren coast. His mouth was a jagged knife-cut. Beneath his thin and distended nostrils a few strands of silky hair formed a repulsive-looking

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mustache. From his lower lip hung a bit of a beard. Except for his dress, he was the counterpart of the ruffians around him.

English for the most part, there was a sprinkling among them of French, Dutch and Dane, with here and there a Latin, a Portuguese or a renegade Spaniard. Their bodies were fantastically clad in nondescript clothes, short canvas or cotton breeches, ragged and torn, and coarse cotton shirts hanging over them, grimy with dirt, smoked, blackened and stained with blood and grease. They wore caps with pointed brims, or hats made of skins, or else went bareheaded. Their belts of untanned hide had pistols and knives thrust through them. From their shoulders hung pouches for powder and shot. Their feet were shod with pigskin or cowhide brogans, made in one piece by their own clumsy hands, and bound in place by leather thongs. Some were not only hatless, but barefooted as well.

SCUM OF THE EARTH

VAGABONDS and rascals, indentured servants from the English colony at Jamaica, runaway slaves who had been sold for debt at Port Royal, scarred veterans of the Thirty Years' War in Europe whose campaigns had taught them only lessons of idleness, and rendered them unfit for the quieter pursuits of life; sailors who had deserted their ships, escaped prisoners from the Spanish galleys in the Mediterranean, jailbirds from Newgate and scum from the alleys of London, Paris and Amsterdam, they had no past save one of poverty, suffering and disgrace, no future but such as plunder and rapine should give them. Comrades by force of circumstances, they had been thrown into the West Indies by a succession of disasters, or had been drawn there by the irresistible lure of adventure and thirst for spoils.

Now they were banding together with a common purpose, to go abroad with torch and musket to carry death and destruction to the isles of the Indies, to the stately ships that sailed the Caribbean and to the Spanish Main itself.

The place where they were met with this object in view was a small cove on the southeastern coast of Tortuga, a rough and rocky bit of an island, heavily wooded, and lying but a league off the northwest coast of the great island of Haiti, which, except for a few Spanish settlements on the coast, was a wilderness, the vast Indian population which Columbus had found there having been wiped out.

In the forests roamed herds of wild cattle and wild boars, the progeny of domestic animals which had been brought over from Europe. These beasts furnished food for the outcasts and derelicts who drifted there, and to Tortuga. The slaughter of them for their flesh and hides, had become the occupation of an increasing number of lawless men, who sold their produce in neighboring islands, or to passing ships.

The meat of the animals was cured after a fashion which had been learned from the Caribee Indians in the smoke of a fire of green wood and bones, over a grate of wood called a barbecue. When cured it was called boucan, and the renegades who made their living as cattle hunters styled themselves boucaniers, or, as the word became twisted by English tongues, buccaneers.

The men on the beach were buccaneers. L'Olonnais had been a hunter with them ever since the day he had landed in Tortuga in a canoe, an escaped indentured servant from one of the colonies in the French West Indies. But he had tired of killing cattle and, leaving the island with a handful of men as reckless as himself, he had taken a Spanish ship. But lately returned from this adventure he was now about to show the rest of the buccaneers how easily they could enrich themselves.

Gesticulating, arguing with one another, debating this point or that, quibbling over the division of spoils as yet safe from their clutches, they scarce made preparation in a practical and businesslike way. Some were in the thick of the argument, running here and there, starting a row or settling one with the same talent. Others were content to doze away in the shade of the palm-trees.

L'Olonnais, here, there, everywhere at once, was busy giving orders, and the brethren of the coast, as the buccaneers called themselves, looked up to him with the greatest admiration, and followed his directions without complaint.

"Hark ye!" said L'Olonnais, in English.

He had climbed upon a pile of ship's-stores waiting to be carried off to the boats in the harbor. His sallow face was flushed. His black eyes danced with excitement.

"Know ye that I have secret information

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from Jamaica that his Excellency, the Governor, covertly will assist us in our undertaking against the Spaniards insomuch as we shall find at Port Royal, upon our return from this, our first voyage, a market for such treasure as God may help us to from the Dons. I shall leave an agent here to act for us in our absence, to take charge of our goods against our return, and I do pledge you one and all to deal fairly with you in every manner. Has every man brought with him as much powder and victuals as he could find, and bullets withal for our proper defense?"

There was a roaring chorus of assent, as the buccaneers held up their weapons, and told what quantities of ammunition they had brought together, and what stores of salted and smoked flesh, as well of tortoises as of cattle and wild boars, according to the obligations which had been laid upon them by L'Olonnais.

Some among them more adept with the quill than were the rest drew up an agreement in writing, which they all signed, the name of L'Olonnais at the top. Most of the men could do little more than make their mark upon the sheet.

According to this agreement they allotted to the Captain six times as many shares as to the common mariners, and fixed at one hundred pieces of eight the pay which should be taken from their booty for the carpenters who had careened, mended and rigged their barks and brigantines. Generous provision was made for the surgeons who were there with their chests of medicines with them. Lastly they stipulated what recompense each should receive for injuries received in battle. Thus, for the loss of a right arm, six hundred pieces of eight should be the reward, or six slaves. For the loss of a leg, from four to five hundred pieces of eight, or a proportionate number of slaves; and for other casualties like sums.

These details were agreed to by the buccaneers with expressions of the liveliest satisfaction, as if they were so anxious to roll in money they could not lose a limb or two quickly enough.

Even the boys, whose duty it would be to set fire to such vessels as they might take, to act as powder-monkeys and make themselves generally useful aboard ship, were not overlooked. The men also set down upon their parchment a stipulation that in the matter of food all should share alike, from the Captain down, two allowances to every man a day, without weight or measure, and to each as much as he could eat.

This part of the work being accomplished to the satisfaction of all, L'Olonnais climbed again upon a great chest that he might be heard and seen by all the company.

"Now that we are prepared to set forth," said he, "I will make known to you the plan which I have made. I propose that we by no means confine ourselves to such vessels as we may meet, for the outward-bound galleons of the flota are strongly convoyed, and those from Spain bear goods not so much to our taste and necessities, but to pillage the rich cities and towns upon the Main. What say ye to Maracaibo?"

HO! FOR MARACAIBO

AGAIN the buccaneers cheered. "Maracaibo! Maracaibo!" they shouted, dancing about for joy, hugging one another, and acting like madmen, while L'Olonnais leered down upon them, his slit of a mouth pressed into a single line of cruelty, his eyes aflame.

"But know ye," he added, holding up his hand for them to be still, "no prey, no pay!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the buccaneers, and thus accepted cheerfully the law of loot he laid down for their observance. Each man knew that he must work and fight, if need be, die, for the sake of gold.

"Now then, let us get under way!"

Michel le Basque, a soldier who had won some fame in the wars in Flanders, and who, at that time, was the Major of the island, had watched the preparations of the buccaneers with interest, and now as they went marching off to their boats he could restrain himself no longer but, casting in his lot with them, declared his intention of going also.

A short, stout little man, with a ruddy face and twinkling eyes as crafty as any rat's, he concealed beneath an outward appearance of good humor an insatiable greed and a nature as cruel as a savage's. As befitted his rank and station, he was both better clothed and better armed than the ragged hunters, who looked up to him as a natural leader, and a man not only versed in warfare, but one holding a position of responsibility and authority at Tortuga, who might be of value to them when they returned from their raid and needed a safe place in which to lay low for a

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time. As he was a veteran, L'Olonnais made him Chief Captain by Land.

In the cove under the hills of the island lay the eight small vessels of the fleet, the largest mounting but ten guns and presently with cheers and shouts they all went on board, above six hundred and fifty men in all, and, weighing anchor, dropped over to a small bay on the north coast of Haiti, where they provisioned their ship with more victuals and took into their company a number of French hunters who expressed a desire to go with them.

It was in the month of April, 1667, when they quit Tortuga, but not until the last day of July did the weather permit them to sail from their last rendezvous, contrary winds having held them back. At last they found a fair wind and bore away eastward toward Point Espada. Off the cape they fell in with a Spanish ship, from Porto Rico for New Spain, on the coast of Mexico. L'Olonnais, who called himself the Admiral of the Fleet, claimed the honor of going out with his ship alone to take the first prize.

The Spaniard, who mounted sixteen guns and carried a force of eighty fighting men, recognized him for what he was, and came on boldly. The buccaneers, however, outsailed her and, getting the wind of her, bore down to lay aboard. L'Olonnais directed the fight, and his men, trained marksmen, swept the decks of the galleon with their musket-fire, so that her great guns could not be manned.

Coming at last to close quarters, the buccaneer ran his bowsprit into the fore part of the main-shrouds of the enemy and, the vessels holding together, L'Olonnais led about twenty of his men upon her deck over the forecastle. Rushing upon the Spanish Captain, L'Olonnais cut off his head with a mighty sweep of his cutlas. The blood that ran into the hilt of his sword he drank, as if it had been wine, nor did it intoxicate him the less, for the sight and the smell of it seemed to make a demon of him.

Even after the Spaniards had cried quarter, and the ship had struck, L'Olonnais continued to rush among the Spaniards, and many of them he cut down and hacked to pieces, and with his own hands cast overboard, even before they were quite dead.

This, their first prize, proved well worth while for, when the buccaneers examined her papers and broke into her hold, they found themselves possessed of one hundred and twenty thousand weight of cocoa, forty thousand pieces of eight and the value of ten thousand more in jewels. Putting aboard a crew, L'Olonnais sent the vessel back to Tortuga to discharge her cargo, giving orders for her to rejoin the rest of the fleet at the island of Saona, on the extreme southeast coast of Haiti, and not a great distance from where she had been taken.

Upon casting anchor at their rendezvous, the buccaneers espied another Spanish ship standing in for the bay. L'Olonnais lay still until the galleon came within gunshot, whereupon the pirate slipped his cable and came upon her before she could get under way upon the other tack.

He gave her a broadside, and she struck. She proved to be for San Domingo, with provisions for the garrisons on Haiti, and money for their pay, so that she yielded twelve thousand pieces of eight in ready money and a great quantity also of powder, muskets and cutlases, for which the buccaneers were very grateful.

In a few days they were joined by the Spanish prize which had been sent to Tortuga, and which L'Olonnais took for himself, seeing that she was a stancher and larger vessel than his own, and mounted sixteen guns. This, while an advantage, was not counted so great a thing by the buccaneers, who fought best at close quarters, and put their reliance in their muskets.

To one of his comrades, Anthony du Puis, a man who had proved his mettle, and had become a great favorite with the buccaneers, L'Olonnais gave his own ship, a brigantine, the mizzenmast square-rigged with two sails, and the mainmast rigged like that of a bark.

Taking also their second prize, her crew, like that of the first, having been set ashore, the buccaneer fleet put away immediately for Maracaibo, on the gulf of that name in Venezuela. The town, they knew, had a population of three or four thousand including slaves, and could muster eight hundred fighting-men under arms. With these they believed themselves able to cope.

SWAMP AMBUSCADES

IN THE narrow neck of the gulf, where it opens into the lagoon upon which Maracaibo stands, the buccaneers found two islands. That on the east, called Watch Island, had a house upon it, where a sentinel

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was stationed. On the west was Pigeon Island, which was fortified. The channel lay so close into the shore on this side that the buccaneers saw that the guns of the fort commanded it completely. Keeping out of sight of the watchman on the eastern island during the night of their arrival off this place, L'Olonnais the next morning sailed his ships into the mouth of the lagoon, or lake of Maracaibo.

Casting anchor, he landed all his men on Pigeon Island and began an attack upon the fortress which commanded the bar. The fort consisted only of baskets of earth placed upon a rising ground, where only sixteen guns were planted, and the buccaneers thought they would have no difficulty in taking it. But the Spanish Governor, having witnessed their landing, placed a detachment of his men in an ambuscade on the line of march they must take, with a view to cutting them off from the rear while he attacked with the main body in front.

As the pirates formed along the beach Michel le Basque, his little rat-eyes twinkling craftily, drew L'Olonnais aside.

"What are your plans?" he asked.

"*Mon Dieu!* I shall march up that hill to the fort and take it at the point of the cutlas!" cried L'Olonnais.

"Have a care!" admonished the wary Le Basque. "Have a care! I have fought these tricky Papists in Flanders and the Low Countries. How do you know but that they have a trap for you in the woods?"

"*Sacrê!* You are right, my friend!" replied L'Olonnais. "Here, you!" he cried to his men, "do fifty of you go forward a piece and smell out these Spaniards, and Le Basque shall show you the way." So it came about that, proceeding into the heart of the thick forest, they fell into the ambuscade but, being on their guard, were not taken so much by surprise that they could not hold their ground.

They fell upon the Spaniards with fury, and not a man of those in the ambuscade was able to make his way to the fort. Those who escaped crossed over to the mainland and ran for the town, spreading the alarm, and bidding the terror-stricken inhabitants to flee into the country with as much of their goods as they could carry.

Meanwhile L'Olonnais turned his attention to the fort, which the buccaneers, covered with grime and sweat, and bleeding from the wounds they had sustained, assaulted with great vigor. For three desperate hours they braved the cannons' mouths in attack after attack, spurred on by their leader, whose tall, lean figure was ever in the front rank, cutlas in one hand and pistol in the other, until, at last, the Spaniards gave up the fight and, throwing down their arms, begged for quarter.

The pirates tore the fortress to the ground. They nailed the guns to render them useless, and burnt what they could not destroy. Then they withdrew to their vessels, and the next day sailed six leagues up the lagoon and landed at Maracaibo, which they found deserted.

Rushing into the town with shouts and yells of joy, the pirates rummaged the stores and warehouses, broke open the wine-casks and were soon amusing themselves in the wildest excesses. They took possession of the best houses, gobbled up all they could find to eat and stole whatever they could lay their hands upon.

The next morning they sent into the surrounding woods parties which returned at evening with twenty prisoners, many mules laden with household goods and twenty thousand pieces of eight.

Not content with so small a loot, they put their prisoners on the rack, and endeavored to compel them by torture to confess where more might be found.

A FIEND TORTURES

L'OLONNAIS was beside himself when even these cruelties were unavailing. He drew his cutlas and, seizing one of the prisoners, hacked him to pieces before all the rest.

"If you do not confess where you have hidden the remainder of your goods I will do the like unto all your companions!" he screamed, his sallow face distorted by passion, his eyes burning like coals of fire.

Grasping another Spaniard by the throat, with his cutlas he cut a great gash in the man's breast and, pulling out his heart, gnawed at it with his teeth, in a perfect frenzy of rage and hate.

"Now will you declare where your riches are concealed?" he cried.

This brought some of the wretched inhabitants to terms, but not to the extent of satisfying the rapacity of the buccaneers, nor had they found, after fifteen days de-

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voted to looting, a booty large enough for their eyes.

Suffering from their hurts, disgruntled, grumbling at their ill-fortune, and as quick to blame their Captain as they before had been to praise, the pirates gathered in the plaza, complaining bitterly of their luck, and cursing the Spaniards with a hearty good-will. Le Basque, noting the signs of dissatisfaction, and his consuming ambition getting the better of him, determined to seize a favorable opportunity to check the growing popularity of L'Olonnais, who, from a common cattle-hunter, had suddenly become a great general, with more than six hundred men at his command.

He stepped forward with a suggestion.

"What remains for us to do now, men," said he, "is to leave this accursed place and try our fortune at Gibraltar, which lies near the head of the lake. It has been made known to me that this city is exceeding rich. What say ye, brethren of the coast?" With these words he turned to L'Olonnais and looked him in the eye.

"Hurrah!" cried the buccaneers, flinging their caps into the air.

L'Olonnais, not daring to bring his leadership to an issue, and easily perceiving the motive of Le Basque, threw himself into the scheme. Instantly the brethren of the coast were astir. They gathered together their possessions, including some small store which had not yet been stowed away on their vessels and, rushing into their ships, made ready to weigh anchor and sail to the head of the lake, where Gibraltar lay in the midst of a rich country, surrounded by sugar-plantations, and forests of valuable timbers.

But the Spaniards, learning of their intentions, found means to convey the news to the Governor of Gibraltar, a man of great courage, who put his eight hundred fighting-men upon the defensive.

He raised a battery of twenty guns, and another mounting eight guns, in such places that they commanded the channel.

The buccaneers were greatly astonished, when they arrived off the place, to discover the preparations which had been made for their welcome. L'Olonnais called a council of war, and set forth the difficulties which confronted them.

"But notwithstanding," he said, "have a good courage. We must either defend ourselves like soldiers, or lose our lives with all the riches we have gotten. Do as I shall do, who am your Captain. We are able to overcome greater numbers than there possibly can be in this town. The more they are, the more glory we shall attribute unto our fortune, and the greater riches we shall increase unto it."

The buccaneers greeted these brave words with a cheer, and swore to follow their Captain wherever he should lead them, but L'Olonnais, to clinch the matter, aroused their cupidity also.

"Hark ye, men," said he. "In this town we shall find the goods which have been brought here for safety from Maracaibo. We shall thus be doubly repaid for our trouble. But know ye, withal," and there was a glint in his eye that made the pirates shiver, "that the first man who shall show any fear, or the least apprehension thereof, I will pistol him with my own hands."

Upon reaching the conclusion to attack the city, the buccaneers cast anchor near the shore, a quarter of a league from the town, and the next day, before sunrise, under the cover of a heavy tropical mist which hung ghostlike over the blue waters of the lagoon, they landed half their force, three hundred men in all, well-armed, and well-provisioned.

Into the wilderness of the jungle they plunged, L'Olonnais and Le Basque at their head. Just as the Spaniards had hoped they would do, they found what they supposed to be the road to the town, but which was, in reality, a decoy which led them into a dense swamp where numerous ambuscades had been planted. The pirates were soon mired to the waist. They floundered about in the ooze, beset by swarms of mosquitoes and gnats which tormented them and all but closed their eyes with their stings. To make matters worse, the Spaniards opened a hot fire upon them from their ambuscades, taking them completely by surprise, for Le Basque had thrown out no advance-guard, and the whole force was caught in the trap.

Cursing, shouting, hallooing encouragement to one another, the pirates were finally obliged to fall back, but they quickly rallied and returned to the attack with great valor. With their cutlases they cut down the branches of trees and spread them upon the surface of the swamp so that they could sustain themselves. Finally, struggling on, they came at last through the morass to

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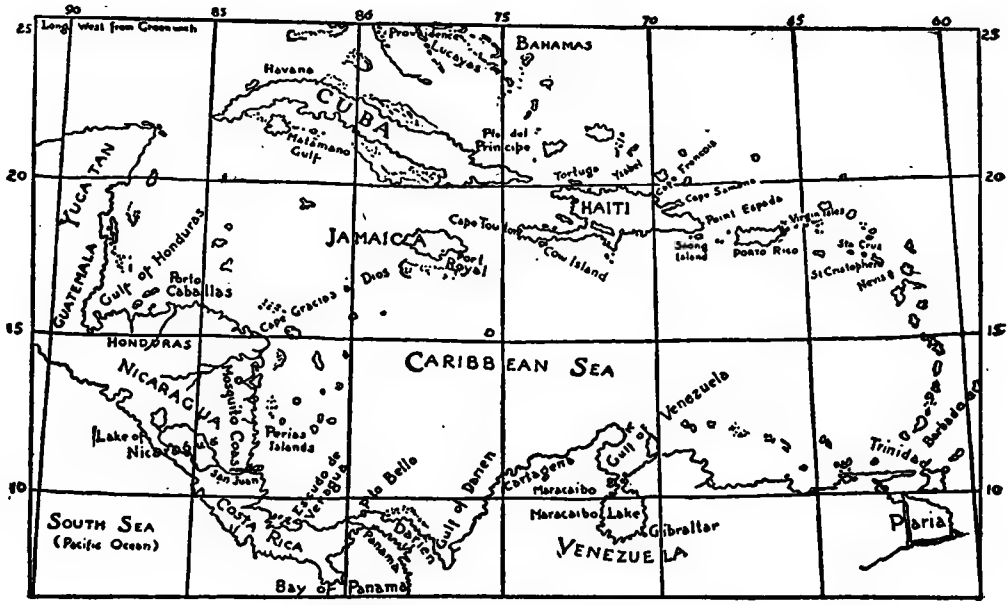

HAUNTS OF THE BUCCANEERS

firm ground on the other side, nearest the city, which was in plain view. But here the Spaniards met them in such force, and poured into their ranks such a hot fire from a battery of six guns, loaded with bullets, and pieces of iron, that they were obliged to retreat into the tangled forest through which they had come.

"Now, men!" cried L'Olonnais, "there is but one way out of this. We must use a stratagem. Do you now fall back, as if in rout, and the Spaniards, thinking we are in retreat, will sally out after us, and when we have drawn them a sufficient way into the jungle we will turn on them and the victory will be ours at last."

STRATAGEM AND CUTLAS

PASSING these instructions along the line from man to man, the pirates began to run back toward the coast, and the Spaniards, falling into the trap, left their fort and followed them, crying, "They fly! They fly!"

Le Basque, who commanded the rear guard of the buccaneers, at a signal ordered his men to turn and, falling upon the jubilant Spaniards, soon turned their joy into grief, for the buccaneers utterly routed them and, in a desperate hand-to-hand struggle killed above two hundred of them. The rest took to flight. The buccaneers captured the guns, and became masters of the town.

In this battle the pirates lost forty of their men, killed, as many more dying later of their wounds, while the bodies of five hundred slain Spaniards were found in all, and taken out to sea the next day and cast overboard. More than one hundred and fifty prisoners were taken, besides slaves and children.

The prisoners, stripped of their belongings and subjected to all sorts of barbarities, were crowded into the churches, under guard, where the greater part of them were permitted to starve to death. For provisions were low, and the pirates thought of their own needs before worrying about their prisoners.

After the town had been looted, and all that was of value had been carried aboard the ships, the prisoners who had survived were dragged into the public square and subjected to frightful tortures. Some were put on the rack. Others were hung up by their toes and ears, and some were roasted over the hot coals of the bonfires which were lighted in the plaza.

Their cries would have melted the heart of a Nero, but the pirates saw red, and their excesses knew no bounds. About the heads of some of the prisoners the buccaneers

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bound cords which they twisted with a stick until their eyeballs popped out. This they called "woolding," and never was there a more cruel torture invented.

Every day for four weeks the pirates ransacked the town, stealing everything they could lay their hands on. Some of them dressed themselves in jerkins and breeches taken from the Spaniards, which were better than any clothes they boasted. Having robbed until they were weary, they demanded of the inhabitants who had escaped, and were in hiding in the woods, a ransom of ten thousand pieces of eight for not burning the town.

L'Olonnais sent word that he would allow but two days for the money to be brought in. The citizens being slow in raising such a sum, L'Olonnais, with his own hand, fired the church belonging to the monastery, whereupon the Spaniards, seeing that the situation was desperate, scraped the money together and carried it to the public square where L'Olonnais awaited their coming. Not until he had counted the entire sum, which required some time, seeing that he was a poor scholar, did he give orders to his men to assist in putting out the flames, which spread from the church so rapidly that a part of the town was reduced to ashes.

The pirates then set sail again for Maracaibo where they demanded of the Governor thirty thousand pieces of eight by way of ransom, and to impress upon him the advisability of finding the sum as quickly as possible, they looted the city of all that had been overlooked the first time, which was little enough, murdered some more of the inhabitants, and despoiled the churches of their altar-cloths, bells, pictures and images.

The wretched citizens finally scraped together twenty thousand pieces of eight and five hundred cows, and with these spoils, and a great number of slaves, the buccaneers finally departed, after first gathering in the cathedral and singing a *Te Deum* in celebration of their victory.

Having now been two months in Venezuela the brethren bent their course for Cow Island, off the southwest coast of Haiti, which was a favorite retreat for the French cattle-hunters.

Here they landed to careen their vessels, measure their plunder and make dividend of the spoils, which amounted in all to above two hundred and sixty thousand pieces of eight in ready money, besides plate, jewels, silks, linen and other valuable goods.

All the plate was weighed, reckoning the rate at ten pieces of eight for every pound, and the jewels were prized, to arrive at an estimate of their value. Those who had been wounded received their shares first, after which L'Olonnais, Le Basque, and the other officers and Captains of the various vessels and, lastly, the men, were given each man his proper share.

This being done they returned with great rejoicing to Tortuga, laden with riches, but in a few months they were as poor as they had been at first, for they threw away in the ale-houses and taverns, and in all manner of excesses, what they had obtained at such tremendous cost. So, in a short time, they were eager for another expedition against the Spaniards, upon which L'Olonnais promised to lead them.

If the reputation of this mysterious Frenchman had been considerable before, it was now tremendous. More men flocked to his standard than he required for his operations. He had the pick of the derelicts of the West Indies as his companions. And so, enlisting as choice a crew as might have been found in all the seas, he very shortly had assembled at the rendezvous in Tortuga close to seven hundred of the brethren of the coast, eager to go upon another voyage with him, and readily agreeing to his plan, which was to sack the towns upon the coast of Nicaragua.

KING OF THE BUCCANEERS

THREE hundred men he placed upon a large ship which he had taken at Maracaibo. The balance he distributed among five smaller vessels, making a fleet of six ships in all. Victualing the fleet on the north coast of Haiti, where they could find flesh in abundance, the buccaneers steered their course for the gulf of Matamano, on the south coast of Cuba, where they seized a number of canoes for use in making landings in water too shallow for their large vessels. Then they sailed away for Cape Gracias á Dios, on the Mosquito Coast, one hundred leagues, as they reckoned it, almost due south from the Isle of Pines. Hauling away a little to the southeast, they then stood to the southward. But the northeast trades failed them and a great

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calm fell, which left them at the mercy of the waves.

The sails flapped idly at the masts. The heat of the tropics poured down upon them, and the pitch oozed out of the cracks and fried upon the decks. By day the sun hung in the sky like a burning torch. By night the stars sprinkled the polished surface of the sea with a million radiant gems. The men, without duties to perform, spent their time at games of chance, staking not only what riches they already possessed, but such as they hoped to obtain as a result of their adventure.

L'Olonnais, who was a fair navigator, and familiar with those seas, was greatly astonished when the reckoning the second day out showed that they were drifting with the current to the south and westward at a rate of above two knots an hour.

"What do you make of this, friend?" asked the Frenchman of Le Basque. "The charts show no such current as this, insomuch as the drift in these parts is in the opposite direction and should set us far out of our course to the northwest, between the coast of Yucatan and the southwest coast of Cuba."

Puzzling over this strange freak of current and weather, L'Olonnais and Le Basque finally gave it up. They drifted steadily for ten days after quitting the Isle of Pines, and made a landfall in the gulf of Honduras, far to the west of Cape Gracias á Dios, and none too soon, for they were sorely in need of both water and provisions.

Sending a pinnace ashore to spy out a landing-place and to fill the casks, L'Olonnais the next day took his fleet to a fair anchorage at the mouth of a considerable creek, and landing-parties were sent ashore to rob the Indians of their food and obtain victuals for the vessels, so that they could proceed upon their voyage.

They then sailed up and down the coast of the gulf of Honduras, pillaging such Spanish settlements as they could discover. At Porto Caballos they found several storehouses where the Spaniards kept goods which awaited the coming of the flota, as the fleets of great-bellied galleons, homeward-bound from the Indies, were called. In this harbor was a Spanish ship, mounting twenty-four guns and sixteen mortars.

"*Voilà*!" cried L'Olonnais, his black eyes snapping, his nostrils quivering as if they scented the battle from afar, and pointed to where she lay at anchor, a league off.

A hearty cheer from the pirates sounded by way of response. Instantly everything was astir on board the buccaneer fleet, and the Spaniard, perceiving the enemy at the same instant, as the squadron came into view around the point of a cape or neck of land, sounded to quarters. They got their anchor aboard and the sails broke out, and on she came with more courage than discretion, for most of her crew were ashore in the town. The balance were not enough to man her, and ran her aground.

"Into the boats, men!" shouted L'Olonnais, and two large canoes carrying about thirty men each put off from the flag-ship, and boarded the Spaniard, one at her forechains, the other on the opposite side, amidships. The Dons fired one broadside, which did no damage, and then, the pirates being already swarming aboard, struck.

L'Olonnais, meanwhile, sent a considerable force ashore, which took the town and put it to the torch, completely destroying it. They took also many prisoners, whom they subjected to fiendish cruelties, endeavoring by torture to make them confess where their possessions were hidden.

L'Olonnais himself led the landing-party and, flying into a fearful rage when the booty they secured failed to measure up to his expectations, he seized one of the principal men of the town. Pulling out the man's tongue, he sliced it off with his cutlas. Some of the inhabitants saved their lives by escaping into the country, but of those who were taken all save two, who were spared to act as guides, were butchered.

"*Diable!*" shouted L'Olonnais. "There is nothing to be found in this cursed place, but one of these Spanish dogs tells me of a city, San Pedro by name, twelve leagues up the river from here, and I have a mind to go there . . . . Van Vin!" he summoned one of his lieutenants.

Van Vin, a huge hulking Dutchman with the body of a bull, lunged out of the ranks and waved an informal salute at his leader. A great blonde brute of a man, with yellow hair that fell to his collar-bones, and a pair of blue eyes buried in a round, fat face deeply pockmarked, he had been promoted to be Chief Captain by Land, to take the place of Michel le Basque, who had been made second in command to

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L'Olonnais, and was left in charge of the fleet.

"Do you," said L'Olonnais, "remain here with one-half of our force which has come ashore, while I, with two hundred men, march to this place I have been told of and test the color of its gold." The pirates were soon ready for the march, pouches for their powder and bullets filled, and each man carrying a store of provisions for their needs upon the way.

They started off briskly enough and covered six leagues of the distance in good time and without accdent but, reaching a rougher country, they fell into an ambuscade which the Spaniards had cunningly planted.

Taken by surprise at first, the buccaneers rallied and returned to the assault.

THE DEATH-DUEL

L'OLONNAIS threw himself into the fight like a wild beast. Screaming orders to his men to follow him and not to be dismayed, he leaped upon the Spanish Captain with the fury of a wolf, and for the first time his blade met one equal to his own.

The Spaniard, but lately arrived from Cadiz, had not been in the tropics long enough to have become enervated by the climate and indolent mode of life. He was a soldier who had seen service against the French and the Moors, a man of middle age, rather above the average height, and as tough and wiry as his own slender sword. It was cutlas against rapier.

Every slashing sweep of the great blade which L'Olonnais made at the head of his antagonist was parried with a coolness which put the pirate into a frenzy, and when the Spaniard's point ripped open his cheek he was like a madman.

His eyes full of blood, his ear hanging by a shred of skin, choking, gasping, L'Olonnais would have retreated from so formidable a foe, but a great snaky tropical vine covered with long sharp thorns held him in an embrace from which he could not tear away, struggle as he might.

He knew that if he for one single instant relaxed his vigilance, the point of steel flashing ever just in front of his eyes would find its scabbard in his skull. The Spaniard had the advantage of him, too, being upon slightly higher ground where the undergrowth was not so dense, and where his sword-arm had greater play. Bleeding from his wounds, almost exhausted from the heat and exertion, L'Olonnais set himself for his last stand.

All about him in the tangled jungle the Spaniards and pirates fought hand to hand. After the first volleys from their muskets and pistols, the buccaneers found no time to reload their pieces, and so threw themselves upon the Dons with cutlases and halberds, doing great execution among them.

The Spaniards presently fell back, then broke, and ran, and the pirates set up a shout of victory. It was then that, for the first time, they became aware of the duel to the death that was being fought on the extreme flank of the barricade between the two Captains. L'Olonnais, dripping with blood, his stroke every instant growing weaker and weaker, had worked his way around to command a slightly better position, and the two men were on more even terms. The right arm of the Spaniard hung limp and useless at his side from a great cut in the shoulder, but he had taken his sword in the other, and parried and thrust as dexterously as before.

The point of his blade was at the pirate's throat, and he about to drive it home, when, with the roar of a wild bull, one of the buccaneers, who had come up from behind, hurled himself upon the Spaniard, and bore him to the ground, his head split open with a pike.

L'Olonnais spat upon the face of the dead man, and it was all his comrades could do to prevent him from throwing himself upon the prostrate body, and gnawing it with his teeth. They led him to a little stream which ran hard by and, binding up his wounds, endeavored to persuade him to return to Porto Caballos, while they went on to San Pedro without him.

But he would have nothing to do with such a scheme. The pirates camped at this place, and the next morning L'Olonnais insisted upon taking the lead when the march began. He caused a Spanish prisoner who had been taken to be brought before him, and tried to bully the man into showing them the way to the town, but the Spaniard contemptuously refused, so L'Olonnais ran him through, and left him there upon the ground.

"The Spaniards shall pay me for this!" he cried, and took an oath to be revenged.

Cutting a way through the jungle as they

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proceeded, the brethren of the coast took up the march to San Pedro, with no other guide than the river, which they followed. The next day they fell into still another ambuscade, where they were again successful, and on the succeeding day were trapped in still another, but won a victory as before.

This last barricade where the Spaniards had planted their ambuscade was the strongest of them all, but the pirates, throwing fire-balls into it, killed large numbers of Spaniards, and at last reached the town, which was defended by several heavy guns planted behind defenses made of sharp-pointed thorn-trees and vines.

But the pirates, having passed through so many dangers, were not to be balked by another. Hurling themselves upon the fort they took it with no other weapons than cutlases and fire-balls, so that the Spaniards were obliged to hang out a white flag. The Governor of the town made but one stipulation, which was that the buccaneers should grant quarter for two hours, a proposition to which L'Olonnais readily agreed. The brethren of the coast marched into the town, and for this period they molested no one, and permitted the Dons to carry off their goods into the country without hindrance.

But when the two hours were up L'Olonnais instantly pursued the fleeing citizens into the forest, stole their possessions and brought back many of them as prisoners. Upon these the pirates wreaked their vengeance without pity, submitting them to the most cruel tortures.

Now and then some miserable Spaniard, unable longer to endure his sufferings, would promise to betray the hiding-place of some imaginary hoard and, being unable to make good his promise, would be the more savagely treated in consequence of his ruse. The buccaneers learned that a Spanish ship was expected to arrive at Porto Caballos, and returned thither with their loot, but the vessel had not put in an appearance, nor had Le Basque made any purchase on his own account during their absence.

HUNGER AND MUTINY

BEING out of provisions, the vessels weighed anchor, and the buccanneers went cruising upon the coast of Yucatan. Here they obtained victuals sufficient for their present needs. Three whole months were spent thus when, hearing that the Spanish ship they expected had arrived at Porto Caballos, they returned there.

The Spaniard, however, was ready for them. She mounted forty-two guns, and her crew of one hundred and thirty fighting-men were armed to the ears.

L'Olonnais, who had recovered from his hurts, began the attack with great courage in his own ship of only twenty-two guns, assisted by a single small fly-boat. He maneuvered his vessel with great skill, but was unable to come to close quarters on account of the narrowness of the harbor at this point, while the Spaniard subjected him to a hot fire from her broadsides, compelling him to draw off.

A dense pall of smoke overhung the scene of the battle. Under this cover L'Olonnais filled four canoes with his best men and sent them to board the enemy. The pirates were under the bow of the Don before their intention had been discovered. They swarmed up her rigging and landed upon her decks, cutlases and pistols in their hands, and speedily forced below the Spaniards who did not give up their lives in the first rush.

The prize proved scarcely worth the trouble she had caused, for most of her cargo had been set ashore already, and the buccaneers found only an empty bird's-nest. L'Olonnais called a council of war after the ship had been taken, for the men were grumbling before the mast, and he found it no easy matter to keep so many desperadoes under control.

He submitted to his lieutenants a new plan, which was to go to Guatemala, but they demurred. The men, they said, were dissatisfied with the smallness of the riches they had gained so far. The buccaneers aboard the flag-ship of the fleet cast discipline to the winds. They were cattle-hunters once more, free citizens of the world at large. They braved the wrath of L'Olonnais, and came down to the rail of the quarter-deck in a body, Moses Vanclein, a Hollander, their spokesman.

"Where are the pieces of eight we were to pick up so easily, like pears from a tree?" he demanded, while L'Olonnais, his black eyes flashing lightning, bit his thin lips until the blood ran.

Pierre le Picard, who commanded one of the sloops, came aboard to voice the

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protests of his men, and told L'Olonnais to his teeth that so far as he was concerned he proposed to go abroad on his own account. L'Olonnais saw how the wind blew. He knew he was in no position to quell a mutiny. He accepted the inevitable.

Two factions, led by Vanclein and Pierre, and comprising a majority of the entire force, with Le Basque and many of the lieutenants, separated from the rest and, taking their share of the plunder, went aboard their vessels and bore away to the east. Coasting along the continent, they came at last to Veragua, in Costa Rica, which they sacked.

As for L'Olonnais, his lucky star, which had been in the ascendant, was now about to set. Deserted by most of his men, who had left him but one ship, the largest, he found himself out of provisions. His men were obliged to go ashore every day in search of food, and were speedily reduced to such extremes that they were forced to kill monkeys and birds upon which to sustain themselves.

THE TORTURES HE HAD VISITED

HEAD-WINDS and adverse currents delayed his departure for some time, but a change of weather came, and he managed to work out of the gulf at last. He stood along the coast to the eastward until, in about longitude 83° west, and latitude 15° north, he hauled to the southward until he reached the Islas de las Perlas, off the Mosquito Coast.

Here he fell in with a bark for Porto Bello, which stood away with all the sail she could crowd on.

L'Olonnais, intending to give pursuit, brought his ship about. But, not being familiar with the waters, he ran her on a bar where she stuck so fast that nothing they could do could get her off again into deep water. L'Olonnais raged up and down the quarter-deck like a caged wild beast, gnawing his nails and cursing his men. They unladed all the guns, iron and heavy stuff, but without effect. The ship was fast, and would go to pieces in the first storm that struck her.

There was nothing else for it. The men fell upon the ship and ripped her apart, and of her timbers the carpenters built a long-boat in which to escape.

Meanwhile, a party of them going ashore one day, they were surprised by the natives who captured one of their number, a renegade Spaniard, and cooked and ate him, as was discovered later when the pirates found their companion's charred bones at the scene of the feast.

The long-boat, being finished, proved too small to accommodate all of the buccaneers, who cast lots among themselves to determine which should go with L'Olonnais, and which should stay upon the island until their comrades found means to return for them. The long-boat and a small skiff having been stocked with provisions and water, one half of the brethren sailed away for the coast of Nicaragua, where they fell in with both Spaniards and Indians, who attacked them jointly and killed above half of them. The rest escaped to their small boats, and put to sea.

They were reduced to such extremities that they cut their leather belts and bullet-pouches into strips, and boiled and ate them for food. Starving, desperate, they bore away for Cartagena, on the northwestern coast of South America, on the Main, in search of a vessel in which to return for their companions marooned on the island.

Being obliged to put in on the coast of Darien for provisions and water, L'Olonnais and a landing-party were surprised by Indians who rushed upon them out of the forest. Outnumbered ten to one, the buccaneers put up a game fight for their lives but, their powder and bullets running out, the savages struck them down with their arrows and spears.

His back to a tree, a gaping wound in his breast and an arrow through his thigh, L'Olonnais was game to the end, his bloody cutlas cutting down Indian after Indian as they came to close quarters with him, until at last, hacked almost to pieces and too weak from loss of blood to defend himself any more, he pitched forward on his face. The Indians tore him to pieces while he was still alive and, building a great fire, threw him into it, limb by limb.

Some of his companions shared the same fate. A few, who had remained in the boat, put off to sea and escaped with their lives. Those of the buccaneers who had been left on the island were found by an English pirate from Jamaica who happened to land there. They joined his company and set forth upon a voyage to the Spanish Main which ended most disastrously, for few of them were ever heard from again.

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Outlaws

by Calvin Johnson

MY BOSS, Sheriff Jim, has said that I am a curious cross between mastiff and shepherd, and long ago he named me Nero, after a man who was very harsh-tempered in his day. Sometimes, while pretending to doze, I am really hanging my head in shame to reflect that I have lived up to this man's wicked reputation, and I will let the fox-terrier next door nip my legs, which is good penance to an outlaw.

But in the old days I was proud as Sheriff Jim himself, who had many prisoners in jail and one at home. Those in the cells would sometimes shriek and batter the bars as though to bring the walls about them. They would bite and struggle in the corridors when dragged past, cluttered with iron manacles.

But the one at home, faded and drooping as an Autumn morning-glory, knew her master. He did not speak harshly, nor strike her, but this is a tough county and Sheriff Jim, rejoicing in the sway of desperate men, would come home with that spark of steel in his eye, and his gaunt, powerful body was ever strung to the pitch of fighting.

So the woman had sense enough to obey quietly and it was never necessary to manacle her. I used to think "wife" another name for a trusty and, after supper, would lounge in the sitting-room well-contented with the home arrangement.

Only once did she defy her master, with little fists doubled and eyes shining like his own and, though it was his right to treat her like other prisoners when they rebelled, such a prospect troubled me strangely.

At the height of the quarrel, instead of taking sides with Sheriff Jim, I crouched extended on the floor and with jaws gaping let loose a blood-curdling bellow which startled them into silence. Never but once afterward did I do so uncanny a thing. Other dogs would answer such a roar with death howls and, though the boss and the woman didn't howl, they stopped quarreling and parted thoughtfully.

Later I stalked proudly down-street with the boss, who led the way to the court-room, where there was a great crowd to see a man named Wilton being tried for murder.

He was rather a small man, with stooping shoulders, and the faded look of the woman at the house. He stared about the court-room in a puzzled way, with brown eyes which had no shine of steel in them whatever.

When asked on the stand if he had killed the other man, he replied, "I do not remember."

Then, seeing me, he nodded, but of course I show my teeth to prisoners, who must be kept where they belong. One of the man's enemies, of whom there were many crowding the court-room, patted my head for this and said "Well done."

The jury stayed out only a few minutes and, then without taking their seats again, stood with coats on their arms and voted "Death." A great cheer broke from the crowd of enemies, in spite of the court's cries for order. Wilton, the condemned man, looked at them in his puzzled way, and then nodded to me again.

My master guarded him back to the jail,

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and I walked on the other side, ready to bring him down in case he broke away. But he did not struggle or even speak, until the cage-door slammed behind him. Then he gave one cry, and raised his hand high above his head.

"According to law!" he said, and then, "Sheriff, those twelve men condemned themselves instead of me."

"Yes, yes; be quiet, man," replied Sheriff Jim.

Wilton smiled and answered, "I will be quiet."

Thereafter he never spoke, though I often crouched in the dark corridor ready to answer him with growls. Meantime the day was at hand when I should be accused and condemned, myself.

IN AN alleyway near the jail I met a man who had been imprisoned the day before, and had not been shown to me when leaving the jail, as all prisoners were when released. Of course I brought him down and barked for a jailer. Presently the sheriff came running up but, instead of retaking his prisoner, he seized me by the throat and, strong as I was, threw me to the gutter with a wrench of his powerful arm.

Then he helped the man up, and at his demand gave me a furious beating, cursing me for not knowing an inspector of prisons from an escaped convict.

I could not know this difference and showed my fangs, only to be stunned with his cane and left lying where I was.

After a time I dragged myself to an old cellar where I lay all day, forgetting my bruises and remembering only that the boss had turned on me and brought me down as he would a convict.

It was dusk before I thought it all out; then I was happy again and made haste home. Surely Sheriff Jim had forgotten that he had never explained about inspectors, and it was all a mistake.

I pushed open the door of home with a bark, and stood before him wagging my tail; he looked at me long, then raised his hand and struck me squarely in the face as he would a man. The woman cried out and crouched before me, but the sheriff held her aside and spoke:

"I'll tame the outlaw in you," he said to me.

I looked at the woman, crouching before me with hands held up. I remembered, too, the bellow I had given when she and the master were quarreling and wondered why we did such things for each other. Then I stalked out of the door, not to come back.

II

THAT very yard where I had played as a puppy felt strange. All about, the neighbors' windows shone with lights, but no door was opened with friendly voice or whistle. The town took a horrid, wild scent and, keeping to the middle of the streets, I walked through the dark with bristling hair, till far out in the open fields. There I lay along my belly with head up, listening, till daybreak, without once howling or licking the bruises on my body.

As the light came up I retreated so as to keep in the broad, brown fringe of night. This took me through woods to some steep broken hills. At last there was no shadow to move in, and I crept into a passage among the boulders, through which whistled a blast of damp air. The passage widened into a cave, for all the world like a convict's cell, and yet I felt that here was the true home of a free dog, and that the world outside was the real jail, where all are prisoners to be beaten.

My growling disturbed a fox, who crept past flattened against the wall. Once I blocked the entrance and he gave a shrill yelp, then I let him glide past. Though no dog should attack a creature so much smaller, I felt that he had had a narrow escape with his life.

There is a flat rock, beneath a bush at the entrance to the passage, and here I took station to reflect on what had happened and what was to come. I didn't wish to see the sheriff again, nor his friends, for there was some new, strange business on hand, in which they could not be consulted. There came a delight in low growling. My eyes ached but would not close, and the very pain of bristling hair caused a pleasing madness. It was only when thinking of the woman that I was troubled by this change in myself.

The broken hill fell steeply away from the flat rock. Around its base many leaps below ran a brook, and beyond this a great meadow, across whose far rim soon appeared a moving brown drift.

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Hour after hour I watched this drift, till it turned into flocks of sheep who came on under guard. These guards were two dogs, one a steady, businesslike fellow of shaggy white coat, the other a rangy wolfhound, who was very careless and unreliable. Perhaps my old shepherd-strain was roused by this, for as the flock he was attending scattered, I began to feel a wish to call the wolfhound to his duty.

At the close of afternoon the shepherd-dog was obliged to help him drive in his prisoners. That night I went to the brook for water, and then lay down to sleep maddened by the thought that other dogs would dig up and gnaw the meat-bones buried in the woman's garden.

That night I dreamed of flocks; then of a single sheep, who bleated as I guarded him closely through meadows to my wooded hill.

The second day passed as the first, with one drink of water at dusk. Several times I had seen the fox, who appeared and vanished at pleasure. When he wished to make a particular rock or bush, he would not move in a straight line, but travel in a careless roundabout manner. Then he would disappear, but I always knew he had reached his destination. It was easily guessed that nobody but an old crook would take care to leave so crazy a trail every time he moved. That afternoon I paid close attention to the wolfhound, who once in play lifted the shepherd from the ground as a mother cat would a kitten.

"He is the fighting guard," I thought.

And that night I dreamed of fighting him near a wounded sheep, which the woman was holding her hands over. In the morning, weak with starvation, I reeled about the cave, with red spots dancing everywhere. Rushing to drink at the brook, I saw that my jaws lathered and eyes were shot with blood.

But I didn't want water, and crouched perfectly rigid, craving something else, till the sheep came up the meadow. The sense which seemed to guide the fox coming into me, I ran far down stream before crossing, and then entered the meadow from the far side, near other hills.

WITH the thought that nobody could track me to the cave came boldness, and I walked into the open with the two guards drawing together to watch me. When we were within several leaps of each other, the hound showed his teeth, but the shepherd stood with head aside and his eyes very big and bright, laughing a little.

Suddenly he trotted up with a bark of acquaintance. Perhaps he was tired of the awkward, stupid hound, and was glad to see one of his own breeding, but I walked straight ahead. They fell apart, following one on each flank, till I lay on my belly and took scent of the sheep, who drew close together and ceased to feed. The shepherd, darting in, struck my chest with his paws, and worried my ear. But I hadn't come there for play, and in fact could not understand why I had taken such pains to visit them at all. Having been always the trailer and guard of criminals, it didn't seem possible for me to turn killer, unless the law itself had been changed into that wild rule of the woods under which the strongest takes all.

But when the stupid, suspicious hound suddenly came up, between me and the sheep, for the second and last time, I bellowed, with jaws to the ground. The sheep, understanding, bleated and huddled pell-mell. The shepherd stopped frolicking and stared as though terribly hurt and ashamed that one of my breeding should threaten them. Then, scenting me slowly, the hair of his neck rose as at a wolf, and he took stand beside the hound.

I felt a hunger-pang in my belly. I thought of other dogs gnawing my buried meat-bones, and leaped squarely at the wolfhound's chest. The shock overthrew him, and we lurched fighting through the very thick of the flock. I felt a muzzle against mine and, believing it to be the shepherd, gashed fiercely over my shoulder. A stream of blood flew from the torn throat of a sheep, and I rose up in a joyous, glowing mist.

Then I knew what I was there for, and began to fight in earnest.

At sunset, while I was still gnawing the remains of my outlaw feast, the two limping, bleeding guards drove their flock raveling over the crest of the meadow. Then I returned home by the roundabout trail, as the crooked old fox would have done.

Only once after that did I have to beat the hound, after breaking into the pasture for my daily kill, but the shepherd, shake him hard as I would, gave me trouble to the

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last. Things went on like this for a week, and I had come to feel as grand a figure in my solitude as the stone lion in the court-house square. The thrill of catching criminals for the law was nothing to the desperate fun of outlawry itself, and I reveled in the thought that no man could take me alive.

Then, one morning, I saw a man cross the pasture with a gun over his shoulder, and knew he was looking for my trail. But the old fox had showed me a good trick, and no one can follow tracks upon bare rocks or in water. For a moment I believed that the sheep-guards would join the hunt, but the hound had seen all of me that he cared to, and the shepherd, pretending he didn't understand his master's commands to lead off, got a kick in the ribs.

This kick made me wild at the time, but the shepherd took his revenge out of my own hide next time I called.

That day and the next I lay watching from the flat rock, for there were glints of a gun-barrel among the bushes beyond the meadow, and I have known a number of men who dropped and lay still at the report of a rifle.

Things began to look black, and the second evening I crunched at a bone and wondered if there was not other game I could find to kill. I went to sleep, not only hungry for food, but hungry for that run in the open and the danger.

Next afternoon I worked behind the point in the bushes where the gun-barrel flickered constantly, and saw a lean, hard-faced man holding it between his knees. In a moment I recognized him as the fellow who had led the cheering in the court-room on the day Wilton was tried for murder.

A man who rejoiced so to see his enemy condemned to hang would have no mercy on a dog, and I knew he would sit there, patient and deadly, till I was shot. But it is the life of an outlaw to brave such things and, after circling the pasture, I bolted into the flock from the farther side.

Instead of sparing the sheep, which hid me from his aim, Hardface struck them down on every side till a space was cleared. A bullet grazed my flank, and only by great luck did I make the brush again as the lazy reports began floating over.

That was enough for the present. I stood no show against Hardface with his rifle and, as there was little chance to stalk him unarmed, I went home smelling no blood but my own, and almost ready to howl for vengeance. Especially was I tempted to this wolfish trick when at sunset he threw the bodies of three sheep over his saddle and rode after the flock.

Another day the gun-barrel flickered steadily. Hardface knew I must come back, and I snarled continuously, hating him for this deadly knowledge. I paced the cave as a man does the death-cell, until entirely used up, then fell in a heap, sleeping.

FAR into the night a body with padding feet and whistling breath moved along the hill, though I seemed to hear it in a dream. But when it passed through the boulder-gated entrance and stood dimly seen in the cave's black heart, I was ready to answer the summons, "Come, dead or alive."

A spark—then a flame licking from a sliver of pine—— Strangely enough, before bringing him down I wished to look into the eyes of this man who would seize such an outlaw.

Then the last man in the world I expected to see appeared under the light—Wilton, the condemned murderer. He was hatless, with hair hanging matted about his eyes, which glowed deep and fiery in his skull. His figure was gaunt, his clothing in tatters.

We stared at each other, but, though he recognized me as the dog of the court-room, he did not nod as before. Instead he seemed trying to solve the mystery of my presence in such a place, and boldly held high the torch to search for traces of my old boss, the sheriff. But, finding only my own tracks in the dust, he turned his attention to the fragments of sheepskin and bones which littered the floor.

"So you've left the law and turned killer on your own account," he said, and the fact of having caught me red-handed so quieted his suspicions that he dropped the torch and lay down in the corner, where he slept as though dead, till long after daybreak.

Now I had seen many an escaped convict, and Wilton bore the marks of a long hard flight. But I had lost the instinct to attack criminals and, having it thus driven home that I was one also, patrolled the cave, growling with hunger and very wildness.

Not knowing that there could be any fellowship between two creatures outside the law, I determined that he should not

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escape to give news of my hiding-place, and was more than once tempted to seize him while asleep and settle the matter. But in the very heat of this wolfish impulse the thought of the woman at home crying out against such a killing would lash me back to my haunches.

About noon he turned on his elbow and, after watching me a while with smoldering yellow eyes, rose and walked outside. But, with no mind to let him escape, I followed to the brook where he went to drink, and then back to the cave's mouth.

There he stood a long time, blinking his eyes and cursing softly to himself with hunger, while I watched the gun-barrel flickering away across the meadow. So remarkable a boldness had sprung up in this quiet little man that had he suspected his own enemy of standing guard so near, there might have been a different ending to the affair. As it was he became strangely excited about the time the sheep came down the pasture and clambering on the flat rock yapped with stiffened jaws like a pointer dog.

Only one word he said; "Ouch!" and grabbed his belly with both hands. Then slipping from the rock, he began gliding from cover to cover as the fox travels, with myself stalking and ready to nail him if he attempted escape.

Crossing the brook, we entered the bushes beyond, where he crept on, flattened as a snake. I closed in, knowing that if he once broke into the open under Hardface's gun I would have no chance to stop him, but just then the bushes thrashed back, and after a moment's struggle Wilton ran past me with a sheep in his arms. From the flat rock he had seen it straying from the trusty's flock.

Both dogs heard the bleating and rushed up, only to meet my muzzle grinning from the bushes. A bullet threw up the dust between us and, being afraid that a retreat from this point would result in the discovery of the cave, I showed myself in a dash across a corner of the field, and once more escaped the shots.

My whole body was trembling when, repassing the brook about dusk, I approached the cave, where hairs of smoke were crawling out of the rocks and yellow lights glinted along the passage. The other outlaw was there at feast, after killing as I had killed. Was it to be a revel or a fight?

I stood half blinded in the mouth of the cave, which was flooded with yellow light from blazing cones and pine-boughs. In the midst of this light squatted the man, with uplifted knife and drenched to the elbows with blood. Seeing me he hurled a brand, which bursting behind in the passage, made me leap into the cave, coughing and snarling.

"Don't you see this, you fool?" he said, threatening me with another brand, and then holding it over the huddled carcass of the sheep. "Come; a man is a man and a dog is a dog, whether outlawed or not."

He blinked the sunken eyes craftily and I crept up to lick the hand of this maker of fire, a thing no dog may master. Then I begged, with a yelp of joy, and he threw the sheep's head in my face. From that moment we were comrades, kinsmen in the blood we had shed.

FOR two days there was feasting in the cave, with bones scattered about, and we laughed to each other with bloodshot eyes through smoke rolling like storm-clouds. Sometimes I was puzzled to think that we had lived in this same manner long ago, wild man and wild dog together.

Now my comrade had heard those shots which I had drawn by crossing the meadow and, when I lay long upon the flat rock looking at the flickering rifle-barrel, he looked too, and snapped his fingers.

"We'll wait till that fellow is off watch before making another raid," he said, but as the spark never went out during two days, comrade began whistling to himself and his eyes narrowed to knife-edges of scarlet.

At last he shook himself by the throat as a sign of what must be done to the man who had us penned up and starving. Then we went to stalk Hardface, but it was dusk when we reached the spot, and the sheep were raveling over the meadow-crest.

So, forgetting even our hunger, we romped all the way home, prowling, and charging each other as things of the dark, and there each learned a silent way of signaling which would bring up the other as through the air, quivering, white-fanged, ghostly.

Back home I lingered a moment without the cave, and presently spied a black mass out in the meadow which moved forward as though floating in the moonshine. Then a

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horse whinnied, as its rider, dismounting, plunged through the brook and began to ascend the hill. I knew him at once as the sheriff and signaled comrade, who came out and stood in the shadow at my side.

The sheriff summoned him: "Come down, Wilton! I smell the smoke of your fire, and saw you walking along the hill just now."

It seemed that the hunt had been out for Wilton all over the county, and the sheriff had taken to patrolling woods and fields by moonlight.

There was no answer to this summons and he called again, "I'm starting in after you."

He knew Wilton as the bewildered little man of the court-room, and had no reason to fear him without arms. Even when comrade stepped out into the moonlight with a stone in his hand and warned him back, the sheriff came on just the same.

SO COMRADE stepped again into the shadow, and the other was leaping up the hill, revolver in hand, when a stone turned underfoot, throwing him full length. He rolled clean over before lying still where we could see the upper half of his body in a ray of the moon. After a bit he groaned once and stirred feebly, but could not stand up.

"This is a bad business, Wilton," he said. "My leg is broken."

"Bah," exclaimed Wilton after a moment's hesitation; "a man like you doesn't have to lie and lay traps for a fugitive. I am coming down to look after you."

He did so, and with great efforts succeeded in drawing the wounded man up the slope, and assisting him into the cave. Then the sheriff lay in a corner while Wilton, white and exhausted, wiped the sweat from his face.

The eye of this boss who had beaten me lit up and, crying that here was his old dog, he raised his hand in greeting. But, when I growled back, he became angry and commanded Wilton to drive me over.

But comrade shrugged his shoulders, saying, "This matter is between you and the dog."

I felt him going over the situation with me, in that curious silent code which had come to us, before continuing: "I guess Nero and I haven't anything to say to you."

"You are a convict and outlaw," said the sheriff. "Do you mean to class my old comrade with yourself?"

Wilton and I, understanding each other, made no reply and the sheriff, leaning on his elbow, looked at us wonderingly. Then his eye fell upon the sheep-bones scattered everywhere. He reached out to pick one up and, finding it gnawed and broken as no man's jaws could do, asked sharply whether I had been occupying the cave before Wilton arrived.

"No," replied Wilton quietly.

But the other branded him a liar, and in the same breath called me a traitor to himself and a disgrace to all honest dogs.

"If I'd known you for a sheep-killer, you'd have gotten something worse than a beating," he said, and I showed him my teeth. To discover a determined, unashamed lawbreaker in his own household seemed to madden him, and he began dragging himself toward the revolver which hung in its belt from a point of rock.

But Wilton beat him to it, and then, squatted again by the fire, began speaking:

"You licked the dog didn't you? I overheard the turnkey telling of it. He was an honest dog, and worshiped his overlord of the law. Many a time he risked his life for you, and above all seemed to have a high sense of duty, which caused him to blunder—and be beaten until driven into outlawry to save his life and his character. Well, I respect him for it. I'm in the same boat!"

The sheriff, sitting with his back to the wall, seemed too greatly surprised to speak. In all his life no man had ever talked to him so, and the sweat gathered on his forehead as Wilton went on:

"I'm not through. You remember that hard-faced enemy of mine who cheered in the court-room when I was condemned to death? That man and his relatives persecuted me as the survivor of a family they had hated. They robbed, ruined, even beat me, without cause. Well, in a blind, crazy moment I smashed one of those hornets—driven to seek justice outside the law."

Wilton rose to his feet. "Now, let that man call me to account as you would call this dog—with the outrageous accusation that we kill for lust of killing. Well, he will get more of God's sudden justice from me than this kind-hearted dog visits on you. I wouldn't hold my comrade here back one moment, and if he makes up his mind to

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vengeance for the disgrace you've put him in—why, as I said, that's his affair."

He squatted again and looked straight into the wall through his matted hair. The sheriff made no answer and, as the fire smoldered and sank from sight into cloudy blackness, he looked so like one of those ghosts which float up from dying men that I howled into the roof of the cavern.

The sheriff was not a man to groan over his injury, and his silence during the night was not so remarkable as the change which it seemed to work in him. In the dim morning light his face was grayish, with a new line across the forehead which couldn't have been caused by pain, as he told Wilton that his leg didn't bother him much.

Instead of renewing the quarrel of the evening before, he spoke with a grave manner and thanked Wilton for bringing him water. Later a heavy storm blew up, and Wilton caught a sheep without being shot at. A part of it was roasted, and the sheriff ate with ourselves. At dusk, my comrade, telling me to stand guard, disappeared into the rain and darkness.

The sheriff had not spoken a word to me, though sometimes I caught his eyes fixed steadily upon my face. Now he sat braced against the wall with his wounded leg stretched before him, while I gnawed the bones of the freshly killed sheep. He didn't ask me to come to him again, but sometimes whistled our old home-tunes, which made me suspect that he wished to throw me off guard. I answered with a growl, and after that he fell silent and looked at the floor while the line deepened gradually across his forehead.

Just at dawn Wilton came back with the woman from home.

"Now you have the sheriff located and can bring him help," he said.

He had started away with me at his heels, when who should block the entrance but Hardface himself, with rifle leveled.

Recognizing the injured man he said, showing all his yellow teeth, "I got here in the nick o' time, I should say, sheriff."

"Don't move, Wilton," commanded the sheriff quickly.

THE outlaw, cornered so suddenly by his old enemy, stood a moment in breathless astonishment, then he laughed the harshest laugh I ever heard.

"So it had to be you," he said. "After getting by the sheriff, with his own horse tied outside, and everything ready for a break to friends down in the hills—— Pshaw!" he broke out in bitter humor; "what's the use of kicking."

He stood motionless in his tracks, while speaking.

"Now, I'll tell you the terms of my surrender. I choose the rifle instead of the rope. Sheriff, I'll stand in my tracks while your wife is helping you outside. Then I'm going to take a chance at this hard-faced scoundrel—his gun might miss fire! But either way the fight goes you two don't want to witness it."

"I reckon it won't miss fire," said Hardface, whose eye ran along that deadly barrel to Wilton's breast.

"Come in peaceably, man," cried the sheriff thickly. "I'll try for a pardon——"

"Outside, you two," said Wilton sharply.

At that moment I met the sheriff's eye, bright and glaring as a tiger's. For a moment he seemed struggling to speak, then, "Nail him, Nero!" he yelled in a terrific voice, and the command was so irresistible that my feet left the ground in the instant. The gun was discharged into the roof as I brought down Hardface with such a scattering of bones and ashes that the woman covered her face, expecting murder.

But I had nailed many men, and only threatened the throat of my wailing prisoner, as Wilton, seizing the rifle, patted my head.

"Well done," he said; the very words Hardface had used when I growled at the condemned man in the court-room.

Then we let our enemy rise, and the sheriff began speaking to him.

"I have learned something about outlaws," he said, "and make no mistake in letting Wilton go his way—God save him! Now you can tell far and wide how the sheriff freed his prisoner. Perhaps you and your tribe will be looking for revenge——"

"Why sheriff," cried the other in a whining voice, "it ain't according to law, but I haven't any hard feeling toward you. I was only hunting the dog that killed my sheep——"

"Well, if you change your mind and want revenge, you know where to come," interrupted the sheriff.

At mention of the sheep he winced, but after a moment went on, "Wilton, I might as well have it out with myself, and admit

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that I made a criminal out of my old dog—as true and brave a comrade as man ever had."

"Why, he'll go back to you," interrupted Wilton, and in a sort of rough fellowship drove me toward the sheriff.

"No—no! he must decide for himself," cried the sheriff.

He half rose on his broken leg, holding to his wife, but I had not the old feeling of kinship with him, and looked back at Wilton.

A moment we all stood thus, and I saw Sheriff Jim, weak and sick, draw his sleeve across his eyes.

"You see how it is," he said. "The old boy has made his choice. He wouldn't be happy or have confidence in me any more——"

The woman's hand tightened over his own.

"Next I suppose I'll drive away you too," he said suddenly. "I ain't a fit man to have such comrades!"

"Now Jim, you don't know what you're saying," she cried; "there's nobody deserves better friends!"

The sheriff leaned more and more heavily upon the woman; I could see it in his face, and in his hand gripping her own—he surrendered.

The sheriff was himself a prisoner, and suddenly, wild with fear of being shut out forever from that woman's house, I leaped over to lick their hands and beg to be taken in.

In the China Trade

An Incident in the Career of "Black" Morton

by Leonard Matters

THE sun dispersed the thunder-mists which herald the dawn in the China Seas, and the sharp-eyed Kanaka, limned like a statue on the forecastle-head, picked up the mountain-heights of Hongkong, twenty miles ahead.

At the cry of "Land-ho!" a big man sprang up the stairway leading from the bowels of the schooner, and stepped out on the deck where he stood, an awakened giant, gazing at the deeper, darker blur which a seaman's eye permitted him to distinguish from the rolling banks of cloud.

"That's her," he said, and turned aft to the wheel, where the mate stood lightly fingering the spokes.

"That's her, Bill," he repeated. "Pretty good run, huh?"

"Not so bad, Cap'n. How're y' goin' in?" responded the mate.

"Guess we'll fly everything we've got, and do it in style, Bill. She'll look dandy with the kites, and we'll have the sta's'l on her. It'll draw well when we reach for harbor."

He turned on his heel and went below. Presently he reappeared, carrying with him a canvas bag which he threw on the deck.

"There you are, Tommy," he said, as he

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pulled the varicolored flags of the international code from their neat pockets. "Send 'em up when we make the signal-station. That's how they go."

The saffron-hued Samoan, rejoicing in the cognomen of Tutuila Tommy, and holding among other positions that of flag-lieutenant to the schooner, laid the flags still furled on the deck. The big man called to the mate and retired to his cabin. Presently the Chinese cook was running from the galley with a savory meal, and the Captain breakfasted, while his ship ran on at a smarter pace under the influence of the extra canvas the crew sent up.

The cook made further pilgrimages to the cabin and back to the galley. In the latter place there was a violent clattering of dishes for some minutes, and when next the cook came forth he upended a beef-cask under the break of the forward deck, called to the half-caste bosun and Tutuila Tommy and the three sat down to finish the cut-throat game of euchre that had been in progress the best part of the voyage. The schooner was abreast of the signal-station, perched high up on the nose of land that jutted from the face of the shore, when the skipper came up and fell to pacing the deck.

A flutter of flags broke out on the staff at the signal-station. The Captain stopped in his pacing to read the signal, which asked in curt telegraphese of maritime frankness what the blazes and fumes of it he meant by running by without disclosing his identity, and reporting his business for the information of the chamber of commerce.

The swart face of the skipper filled to apoplectic fulness. It threatened to burst when he looked aloft and found his signal-halyards as bare as a tow-rope. Wildly his eyes ranged the deck, and fell on the little group squatted round the beef-cask.

With a bound he was off the poop. A few elaphantine strides, and he was in the casino. His big boot caught the beef-cask in the middle, burst out a stave, and sent the improvised table a battered wreck into the scuppers, the dirty cards flying in all directions. At the same moment his left arm swung. The cook and the bosun flew off their heels, and rushed howling away. A strong right hand anchored in the well-oiled locks of Tutuila Tommy, and dragged the flag-lieutenant to his feet.

"You swivel-eyed, slab-sided salamander!" the big man roared as he ran the Kanaka abaft the foremast, and thrust his nose within an inch of the deck and the flag-bag, "I'll learn you what port-etiquette is, or I'll knock seven bells out of your soul-case, you greasy junk of tallow! You'd have me called down by a bunch of lime-juicer flag-waggers, would you? Let 'em believe I don't know what's what when I make port, an' discredit an American ship-master would you, while you forget orders, and gamble for betel-nut, you dirty scum, you thumb-lickin', card-spoilin' Wooloo-mooloo waster? Here, get busy on this, or I'll fill your pelt full of buttonholes."

Each verbal explosion was punctuated by a kick or a punch. The Samoan was on his hands and knees, and the final kick caught him free and lifted him with a savage jolt against the butt of the mast.

Picking himself together, Tommy fell on the bag.

"Send 'em up, you sufferin' heathen! That, and that, and that. Get a move on!"

The Kanaka plucked at the little bits of bunting indicated by the skipper's boot, which stamped at the nervous fingers of the flag-lieutenant. In the brief space of seconds Tutuila Tommy spelled out the information that the schooner was the "*Harriet Constance*, Morton master, from the islands to Hongkong with produce."

When the signal was bent on the halyards, sent aloft and broken, the Kanaka had learned a whole lot about signaling, and was also well informed on other matters. From the biting tongue of the enraged skipper he heard the whole of his own current and prenatal history, and that of every member of his family. The ignominy of his birth and breeding was related with total disregard for his finer feelings, if he had any. His fate in this world was pictured with minute attention to detail. The torture that awaited him in the next was so graphically described as to be felt, and it had been indelibly impressed on his mind and body that Captain Theophilus Morton was not a man to be trifled with.

Being a wise man, and a poor hand with his fists, Tommy took the lesson and the information in the proper spirit.

The signal was duly acknowledged from the station, and the *Harriet Constance*, sailing like a witch, reached up to the boarding-grounds. There she picked up a pilot, a medical officer and a Eurasian *providore*. Morton reluctantly handed his ship over

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to the pilot, insulted the doctor with the vulgar health of himself and crew and threw the Eurasian overboard, because for one thing he wanted just twice what the skipper thought he should pay for fresh food and vegetables. Another cogent reason was that the providore swore vilely when Morton informed him that his male ancestors on his mother's side had for centuries sold cow's meat in a Calcutta ghat. Even after that insult, Morton would not deviate from his rule that bad language was intolerable on his ship, and the Eurasian cursed and coughed dirty harbor-water at the same time.

"Guess I'm some historian," he said with a grin. "I've told Tommy enough to win him a will-suit, if there's one hangin' about his family estates, and that fellow enjoyin' the first bath he's had since he was baptized in the Hooghly. Proved I was right, too, or he wouldn't have taken it so seriously. Yes, I reckon I'll have a good day. I've started proceedin's well!"

The schooner tied up to the wharf. Morton spruced himself up and stepped ashore. He looked about him for a few moments to get his land-bearings, asked a question of a passing native policeman of more than usual intelligence and then made off in the direction of the Maritime Club, where ship-captains and traders foregathered.

Captain Morton was in search of a particular man.

The Captain was an American. Likewise he was the best shipmaster from the point of view of excellence of navigation that ever took a schooner through a reef-passage in a howling hurricane. They who have read of his exploits will recollect that he had a code of commercial and maritime morality peculiarly his own. No one could say that he did not know just what was right and proper in the island-trade. No one could say either, that, having this knowledge, he acted in conformity with it.

Down among the islands whence he had just come after refitting his schooner, he had kidnapped the entire population of an islet for labor in a German sugar-plantation, and people who knew him expressed very strong opinions in private about his conduct.

An awkward habit of his of floating into the lagoons and exacting toll from those who had been outspoken in their estimates of his character had engendered a discreetness, or a politic smoothness of tongue, when he was anywhere within a day's sail.

The only persons who could speak freely about him were the Admirals of the old-time British and American fleets in those parts. Those gallant officers had enough evidence between them, gleaned as it were under seal of the confessional from outraged native chiefs and traders, to hang Morton a dozen times over. They made no secret of their itching desire to do so. To whom should fall the honor of doing it constituted the only point of dispute between the two. They made every effort to catch him, but the fear that one might forestall the other nullified their efforts very largely, for they could not part company, and raced about together when good tactics would have suggested hunting for him in different directions.

Black Morton was bold or elusive as it suited him. His schooner was the fastest thing that stretched a topsail before a spice-scented breeze in the coral seas, and as neither Government of the two powers mentioned took much notice of what went on in the Pacific twenty-five or thirty years ago, the Admirals vainly appealed for a ship that could overtake the skipper when he had the advantage of a couple of hours warning, a favoring breeze and an open sea.

All the Admirals seemed able to do was to write voluminous reports of his misdeeds, and give comforting assurances to their Governments, which were not worried at all about the affair, that the buccaneer would be hanged when they caught him, or cooked when the cannibals did. Which fate would best befit his crimes, which would anticipate the other, the Admirals did not say.

Having done their duty, having chased Morton, or rather having been led by him all round the islands, and having justified the reckless expenditure of costly coal by a lavish expenditure of stationery, the Admirals exchanged more visits and drinks. Morton had been absent from his habitat for many months, during which no trading-stations had been raided, consular noses pulled or islands bereft of their inhabitants. All was peace. Then, after months of stagnant silence, Morton had appeared from nowhere with his schooner battered and jury-rigged, had paid the builders of Nounouti good coin for certain repairs and had started in once more on a career of ungodly activity.

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He got wind somehow that the Admirals were after him again, and fled. Had the world been linked up by cables then, as it is now, the Admirals, seated in their respective cabins, gazing frequently into crystal glasses as though seeking therein an answer to the riddle of what had become of the man, would doubtless have been surprised to learn that Morton was at the same moment also crystal-gazing through effervescing iced champagne, in the Maritime Club at Hongkong. There Morton had come in search of a man whose address he had learned at Erromango. There he had found him, and there he was discussing with him a project that forms the real subject of this story.

Late that night Morton returned to his schooner bibulous and happy. It had been a good day, as he had forecasted. No one had evinced a pressing desire to fall on him and run him before the international court. No one seemed to connect him with the central character of whatever thrilling news might have filtered in from the islands. His good fellowship bubbled over, and on the flood of it there came to Bill Hawke, the mate, a choice cigar.

Gift cigars are somehow always regarded suspiciously. Hawke eyed the one the skipper gave him with insulting scrutiny. He bit off the end, chewed it reflectively a minute, spat it out, placed the cigar in his mouth and lighted it.

"Bill," said Morton, "guess who I ran across to-day?"

"Dunno; some guy with free silver, jedgin' from your Sabbath appearance."

"Right so far as the metallic description goes, but who was it? You got another guess comin'," Morton assured the mate.

"Maybe Trawley Leggett. He's somewhere's round these parts. This ain't one of your usual smokes, Cap'n?"

"No, Bill, it came from Hooky Graham. Used to trade round Ponapi. That's the handle of the man I met to-day," replied the skipper. "He had the *Water Witch* in the blackbird-business five years ago."

"Got him," Hawke replied in a burst of intelligence.

He was long on names of ships; short on names of men.

"What's he doin' in this place?"

"Tradin' Chinamen down to Australia. Legitimate, legal, highly respectable business with plenty dollars hangin' to it. I'm goin' into it. The Chows come over from Canton ready to pay any price to get down to Australia. Where they get the money don't concern me, but they're dippy to get down there, where they go scratchin' for gold, or truck-gardenin'. They got to pay five hundred wheels, too, to get in, and the passage-money runs another hundred and fifty. Say, Bill, that'll suit us fine. I allow this packet can carry a matter of seventy-five Chinamen, can't she?"

"She can, but who's goin' to take 'em? You may be soused, Cap'n Morton, but you ain't mad, are you?" asked the mate.

"I guess not, Bill, and there ain't a man can say it and mean it and get away with it. What you got against the business?"

"Jest this, Cap'n. You know you can't take a cargo of Chinamen, or copra, or cats down there. Did you say you had to deliver 'em in Sydney harbor?"

"I did."

"There you are. That settles it. What's the good of lettin' hot air escape about it? You can't go into Sydney harbor and come out. They hanged Cap'n Muir there for half what you done. Get some other idea. This ain't what you come to Hongkong for, is it?"

The skipper looked the mate all over, and burst into a peal of laughter.

"Bill," he said, "if fish is brain-food, you've got to eat a whale sure. That's just what I did come here for. I'm goin' to sail day after to-morrow with seventy-five Chinks. Hooky is goin' to scare up for me. I'm goin' to land 'em in Sydney, but I ain't goin' in there myself."

"Guess I'll get out," said the mate. "If I argue I'll say things, and break up the happy home this craft's been lately."

"That's right, Bill. You go to sleep and dream of bein' hanged in Sydney. You're never cheerful unless you're miserable."

II

THE schooner was abreast of Brisbane. She had flown through Torres Straits, standing well out from the naval station at Thursday Island. Skirting the Great Barrier reef, and bucking her nose into the long swell of the Pacific, she had neared her journey's end without mishap.

Morton had behaved like a gentleman to

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his slant-eyed passengers, and they gathered around him like kids round a Sunday-school superintendent at a picnic, when he pointed out the land of their adoption, lying low on the starboard beam. They listened with interest when he told them all he didn't know about the laws of Australia, and the duties of ship-captains bringing Chinese passengers to the land of high wages and quick fortunes.

"Yes, sir," he said, addressing no one in particular, "we'll sight Sydney Heads, if this weather holds, in a day or two now, and I guess its up to me to get my papers in order. I'll trouble you gents to get your poll-taxes together, and pay 'em over to me in the cabin this afternoon."

The Chinese smiled blandly at what they considered the big sailor's joke, and looked inquiringly at him.

"I'm responsible to the customs-officers for the poll-tax on every mother's son of you," Morton explained, "and until I have the money in my hands and pay it over, not a man can leave this ship. Yes, sir. That's the new law in Australia, and why? Because some dishonest dog-eating low-class Swatow pirates have sneaked ashore without paying, and the captains who brought 'em here, and had 'em registered in the passenger-list, had to fork out five hundred dollars for every son of a gun or go to jail. Under the old law, too, the ship had to pay the taxes for those who didn't have the money. Now we've got to collect it, and hand it over. Ask the cook here. He'll give you the same dope in your own lingo. I'll send him to you, but remember you've got to come through."

Morton had a brief conversation with the Chinese member of the crew, during which quite unnecessary stress was laid on certain horrible forms of punishment and torture. The net result of it was that, whatever conscientious scruples Jimmy had, his eloquence materially assisted in inducing his countrymen to take Morton's receipts for seventy-five times five hundred dollars. The combined poll-taxes went into the safe, where already reposed the bulk of the prepaid passage-money, and Morton had another fair start in life. The key of the safe reposed in his hip-pocket, and even Morton could not reach it without catching his forefinger between the trigger and the guard of a revolver. For the next two days the Chinese watched him closely, and the serene calmness of his face induced a cooling off in the relationship of the skipper and his passengers.

True to his word, Morton brought his schooner within sight of the heads toward dusk of the second day after the collection of the taxes. Tutuila Tommy did not wait for the flag-bag to come to him this time. He went and got it, and Morton surprised him in the act of trying to spell out the schooner's name. His recollection of the particular flags that combined to make it was surprisingly good.

"You can put 'em all back Tommy," said the skipper, "but keep 'em handy for the mornin'. We won't go in to-night."

To the surprise of every one Morton headed his ship out to sea again in the teeth of a strong southwesterly that made the *Harriet Constance* smack the seas good and hard. The mate, accustomed though he was to Morton's reckless driving of his ship, heaved a sigh of relief when the order came to get the stay-sail and the kites off her, after an hour's rough straining.

"Does her good, Bill, to get a blow now and then, provided the wind's steady. I've got some long-distance signalin' to do, and I want daylight for it. Take her easy as she goes. We'll run back a bit in the night, and lay for the heads come mornin'."

He walked to the wheel, saw the course the sad-eyed Kanaka was steering, nodded his approval and went below.

A few minutes later he was rummaging in the forepeak among the odds and ends of junk that littered the rat-infested hole. He picked up an auger, examined its point and dropped it. It was too big and ugly. He took up another, tried it on a billet of wood that lay handy and seemed content.

"This'll do," he muttered to himself as he crawled out, taking the tool with him. In the cabin he was busily occupied for an hour with desperate problems in arithmetic. Apparently he solved them, for he went on deck, and there set a new course that would take the schooner easily back to the heads by daylight.

III

IT WAS a clear, sunny morning when the lookout on North Head espied a schooner under full sail, lurching heavily along in the path of the sun, the Stars and Stripes inverted at her peak,

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and a string of bunting fluttering down her signal-halyards. The lookout man was an excitable person, and he promptly sent word to the boarding-station just inside the heads for a tug to stand by for a ship in distress. Then he closely scrutinized the approaching vessel. Had the inverted colors not told of her distress, there was that in her gait which to the practised eye of the signalman spoke of dire trouble. A moment later the schooner lurched heavily, a trifle off her course, and the lookout caught the full significance of her signals:

SHIP SINKING—PASSENGERS IN MUTINY WANT EARLY ASSISTANCE

A second hurry-call was sent to the boarding-station, and the smoke belched from the funnels of two tugs as they raced out through the heads. The schooner was only a few miles away, dangerously low in the water, and palpably doomed. The question was whether the tugs could reach her in time. Apparently those in charge of her were half demented by fear, for they forgot to signal her name, though they told the shore she was from Hongkong with Chinese passengers.

"Chinese passengers in mutiny, an' the ship sinkin' by the 'ead. God 'elp 'em," was the comment of the signalman on the heads, as he excitedly but impotently urged on the hurrying tugs.

The scene on the schooner baffled description; that is, description that might be expected to do detailed justice to the scene. A few salient facts and happenings may be noted in proper chronological order.

It was breaking day when the land was sighted ten miles ahead, and in obedience to instructions Morton was summoned on deck. He assured himself the ship was heading true for the entrance to the harbor, and casually went below again. There he remained some time, and there he was when "Dutch Charlie," with death-white face, rushed along the deck and broke the news to the mate that the ship was leaking.

"It's cuh-cuh-comin' in for'ard," he stuttered, and the mate stared.

"That's last night's business!" cried Bill, "I knew he'd strain her, crackin' on like he was racin' for the America Cup. Call the skipper, an' get the pump goin'."

The skipper reached the deck in time to get the full blast of a wailing shriek from the main hold, where the passengers slumbered in Oriental suffocation.

"Sufferin' Moses, what's that?" cried Morton. "Keep back, you slant-eyed scum," he roared as the Chinese came tumbling up the ladderway and out on to the deck, making for the solitary boat.

He drew his revolver, and made a fine show of preparing to sell his life dearly, but the Chinese were panic-stricken, and shrieked that the ship was sinking.

"I know it," cried Morton, "and you'll sink with her if you don't keep quiet. Keep her true for it, Bill. Send Old Glory aloft wrong-side-up, Charlie, and get on to the pump. Here you are, Tommy, with the signals. Run 'em up, son, quick and lively."

His orders were carried out, and Morton watched anxiously for a response from the distant headland. He smiled when he saw it, and then looked over the hatch-coamings and saw the water washing about in the hold.

"Three feet of it. It's about time to get busy," he said. "What in the name of the ten prophets is the matter with that pump?"

The Kanakas under the second mate were sweating profusely, but the water came in the veriest dribble. Impatiently Morton drove them away to get a spanner. When it came he set to work, and with a few dexterous wrenches had the working-parts of the pump exposed.

"I'd like to know the tarnation wretch that took the washer out of this contraption," he growled. "I'd learn him not to monkey with a ship's pumps."

He happened to have the missing washer in his pocket, and had the pump sucking merrily when the tugs were within half a mile of the ship.

"Now go for your lives," he commanded, as the crew sent the arms up and down in an agony of haste. "I guess we can just beat it, and beach her easy."

The water poured in a never-ceasing torrent as the hefty natives laid their weight into the work, and the pump-arms went up and down with a rhythmic "clank-clunk, clank-clunk." Below the water sullenly swirled and swished and ran, its surface dangerously close to the hatch-coamings, bearing all the flotsam and jetsam that rises from an ill-scoured ship when the sea gets in. Morton smiled happily when, at his command, the mate threw the vessel round to the wind, and on an even keel the

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water retreated from the third rung of the ladderway, before the powerful throw of the pump.

On the forward deck the Chinese were crowded, jabbering. They hailed the oncoming tugs with shouts of glee, and stretched out their arms as though eager to lay hold of the puffing steamers and hasten their arrival. Whistling encouragingly, the tugs rapidly came alongside, and hailed the schooner's master.

"What can we do for you?" megaphoned one skipper through his hollowed hands.

"Do, you hairy-toothed farmer? Why get these poor sufferin' mutinous heathens away for a start, and pass me a line. I'll stand by my ship, and beach her somewheres."

Morton flourished a revolver as he spoke, to emphasize the desperate straits in which his unruly passengers had placed him by their conduct. It had its effect and, when he drove the Chinese before him, the crew of the first tug were waiting to receive them as they tumbled pell-mell over the rail. The other tug already had a line aboard the *Harriet Constance.* With nothing further for him to do, the master of the first boat gave three prolonged hoots on his siren and, driving his stub-nosed craft at her best seven knots, raced away for Circular Quay, twelve miles up the bay.

The news of the sinking vessel and her mutinous passengers had preceded him, and when Captain Jenkins brought the little old *Defiance* up to the quay he found himself the cynosure of a thousand pairs of eyes. A squad of police were waiting to take charge of the passengers; a corps of customs-officers ready to collect their taxes. These sagacious officials knew or thought they knew the Chinese character well enough to gamble that the money would be with every passenger so long as life was in his body, and they were there to collect it, shipwreck or no shipwreck.

Captain Jenkins related, with graphic touch, the awful plight in which he found the ship and her complement, before the menace of a murderous mob of aliens.

"Murderous? Well they look about as harmless a lot of Chinks as I've ever seen," interposed the police Inspector, "but I suppose we've got to yard 'em up and wait for the skipper to lay a charge. By the way, Jenkins, what's his blooming name?"

"Name, why darn it, I don't know. That's funny; I forgot to ask. But he'll be along presently," said the tug's commander. "Here, ask that fat Chinaman. He seems to be the spokesman of this mob."

"Before you take 'em away, Dempsey," interrupted the principal customs-official, "we'll get the taxes from 'em. Now then, Sling Fat, or whatever your name is, let's start with you. Where's your wad? We've got to get one hundred pounds from you."

"Me no got. Capling Morton 'e say, 'e collect. Wwwow!"

The fat Chinese selected for the lightening-process broke into a woful wail, as his suspicion that he had been taken down, with the rest of his compatriots, was confirmed by the looks of the officials.

"That won't do me, John. We collect the taxes, not the Captain," said the gold-braided representative of Her Majesty.

"Hold on, Clayton," exclaimed the police Inspector. "There's something in this. What's the name of the schooner, Jenkins? Surely you got that?"

"Yes, the *Harriet Constance,*" replied the skipper of the tug.

The inspector let out a whoop.

"Then the Chink's probably right," he said. "It's Morton all right, the fellow we've been waiting for a year or more. Lord, what a nerve to come here under his own name, and in his own ship, and play a trick like that!"

"Well, you've got him now," said Captain Jenkins, quite sure of his facts. "He's in the harbor by now; behind the *Waratah,* if his schooner's still afloat; on the *Waratah* if his craft's sunk."

"I'll wager he's not," said the Inspector. "You don't know this chap. These poor devils have lost their money. Here, Jenkins, stir up that old tug of yours and take me down the harbor as fast as you can go! We may be in time to catch him, but I'm afraid not. He's the most slippery customer ever seen."

The Inspector pushed the Captain ahead of him and, calling for his men, followed on board the *Defiance,* which was soon coughing her way out to the heads again, while the customs-officer corralled his immigrants in a shed.

Morton and his crew worked like Trojans at the pump, while the tug *Waratah* ploughed ahead with the schooner in tow. Visibly the *Harriet Constance* rose in the water as a foamy stream gushed from the pump.

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The mate sat moodily astride the wheel-box, and puffed rings of smoke from his pipe. In each one he saw a noose, and above it three yards of stout manila depending from a gibbet. The gap between the heads seemed to him like the jaws of death into which the schooner was being drawn. With lack-luster eyes he saw Morton lean over the open hatchway.

For a second the skipper gazed. Then he dashed below, was there scarcely two minutes, and came on deck with an ax. Past the startled Kanakas he ran, skipped lightly on to the foredeck, and with one mighty stroke shore clean through the tow-rope where it lay athwart the rail. Dropping the ax the skipper sprang to the fore-sheet, and yelled orders to his crew and the mate, his voice snapping through the warm air.

"Fill away the main topsail! Sta's'l lee sheets; jib, an' get them yards round! Your helm hard aport, Bill! Drop the pump, doggone it! Spring to them sheets lively! Ho, she feels it! Steady as she goes, Bill, close and by! Phew!"

If ever a crew sprang to orders they did not quite see the reason for, and yet obeyed unhesitatingly, it was the crew of the *Harriet Constance* on this occasion. If ever another crew were staggered and collectively "blowed," it was the crew of the *Waratah.* That a brand new tow-rope should part in an easy sea was their first surprise. That a sinking ship should suddenly turn on her heel, and go lightly skipping out to sea, at a knot better pace than their steamer could make, was the second. That she should send up extras like a racing-yacht, and show no signs of coming back for another line, was the greatest puzzler of all.

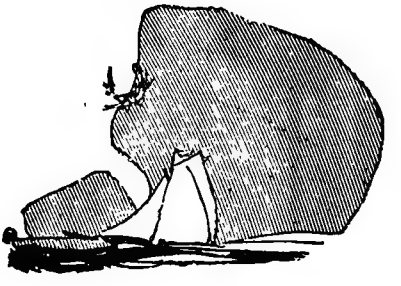
The tug's skipper slung his helm hard over, when he felt his vessel plunge forward, fouled his propeller in the trailing tow-rope, and sat down to swear.

Morton was dancing a fandango on the poop of his ship. He stopped for a second, cast one look back at the heads, turned to the mate and said, "I carry out my contracts, Bill. I've landed the Chows safe and sound. That was a darned tough spell at the pumps, but guess the old packet wanted a washing out to drown the rats, and the roaches, eh?"

"It was the closest thing I've ever been to sinkin'," said the mate, "an' now I guess it's pumps from here to the next place. You opened her up bad in that blow last night."

"Opened nothin'! For a sailorman, Bill, you've got the least imagination I've ever seen. You can bail out all the water she'll make from now on with your old hat. I'll give the plugs in them auger-holes an extra swat to make sure, an' then we'll have breakfast. We've cleared a matter of forty thousand Liberties on this run, an' that ain't bad, even in the China trade!"

The skipper wiped the sweat from his brow, spat in the curtseying schooner's wake and lighted a cigar.



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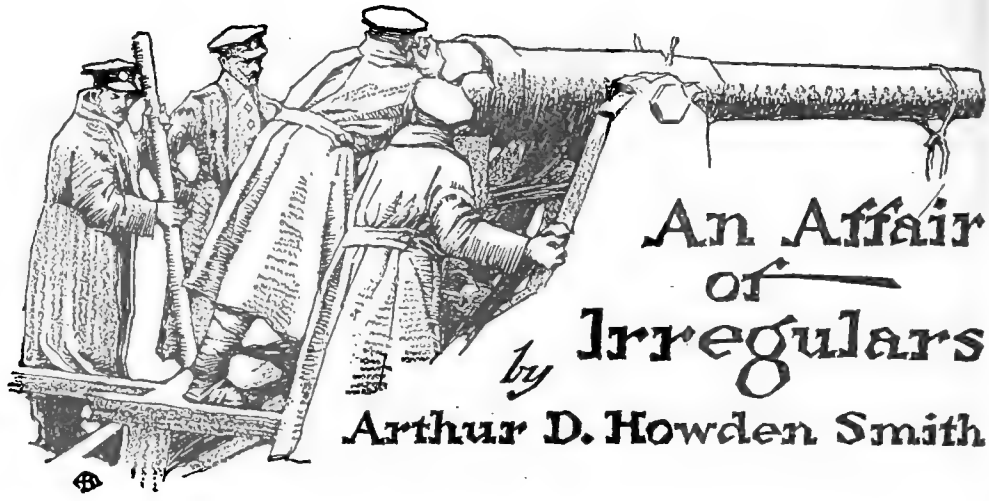

An Affair of Irregulars

by Arthur D. Howden Smith

IN WAR it is the unexpected that counts, the intervention of the contingencies which even the ablest commander can not foresee. This is the story of an incident unforeseen and of the vast consequences for good or ill that turned upon it.

Gigantic armies met and clashed, and the din of their combat echoed and reëchoed throughout the world; fortresses quivered and shook under the battering of insistent assaults; a vast turmoil overshadowed all and, in the wreck, the doings of individuals and small companies of men were blotted out and merged in the marchings and countermarchings of the multitudes.

Whole nations rose up and armed themselves. The peoples of several races abandoned their livelihoods, and became armies —not armies, in the ordinary sense of the word, but assemblages of the entire effective manhood of the people. The young men, the middle-aged, the boys, the oldsters, all found places in the ranks. The women tilled the fields, so that there might be crops to feed the fighting-men, or nursed the sick and wounded. The children did the work the women had given over. Even the dogs took the place of the horses and cattle which had been drafted by the armies.

They were fighting for a great prize, for the assertion of their individual and combined prestige, for the aggrandizement of their powers and dominions, for the liberation of some millions of fellow countrymen, for the whole future of their races. And in the very moment of victory, disaster fronted them, unknown, save only to a few; and the achievement of the many would have crumbled into dust had it not been for the desperate courage of a handful of men.

This is the story.

II

WHEN the Allies of the Confederation of the Balkans—that strange combination which took Europe utterly by surprise—threw down the glove before Turkey, and dared their hereditary Moslem enemy to fight for that meager portion of Christendom remaining in his hands, the Bulgarian General Staff were prepared for eventualities. Three other formidable armies were waiting in leash; and the plans for their disposition were laid. While Servia, Montenegro and Greece struck at the several isolated parts of the Turkish territories within reach of their frontiers, the Bulgars were to deal a single hammer-blow that should crumple the intermediary defenses between the Rhodopes and Constantinople, and enable the Bulgarian battalions to force their way to the gates of the Turkish capital, and paralyze the Ottoman defense at the very inception of the campaign. This was the plan.

Savoff, Demetrieff and Kutincheff, with 200,000 men, crossed the Rhodopes from Dubnitza, Kostendil and Stara Zagora. Kutincheff skirted the Black Sea coast,

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sweeping aside the feeble opposition offered to him and swinging gradually toward Kirk Kilisse, situated between the huge fortress of Adrianople, key to European Turkey, and the sea. Savoff, commanding the main Army of the Center, led 100,000 men upon Mustapha-Pasha, outpost of Adrianople, chased out its garrison, and locked wings with Kutincheff. Thus, Abdullah Pasha commanding the Turkish Army of the East, 200,000 men, found himself confronting 160,000 Bulgars.

He had the advantage in numbers, but his troops were separated. Savoff and Kutincheff saw this. They attacked Kirk Kilisse, strongly fortified and held in force, but isolated alike from Adrianople and from the main body of the Army of the East. They carried it, and circled around Adrianople, masking its iron chain of forts with 50,000 reserves.

In the meantime, Demetrieff had crossed the frontier from his base at Kostendil, driven the Turkish garrisons from Nevrokop, Melnik and the other principal places of Central Macedonia, and pushed forward in a great half-circle until he joined his left wing with Savoff's right, a few miles south of Adrianople.

Savoff now had 200,000 men with whom to attack Abdullah's four corps of about the same total strength. The Turks were strung along a line of thirty miles from Lule Burgas to Bunar Hissar. To drive them back Savoff tried the same scheme he had used successfully at Mustapha-Pasha and Kirk Kilisse. He rained shrapnel over the Turkish positions for a day, then delivered a frontal attack in force and, while he kept the enemy in play by these means, launched formidable columns against both the right and left flanks. On the right flank the Turks held firm, at first even succeeding in driving the Bulgars back. But on the left they gave way. Lule Burgas was taken. The Bulgar artillery seized the positions on the heights above it abandoned by the Turks, and poured a hail of shrapnel into their huddled remnants.

Apprised of this success, Savoff pushed his frontal attack on the center with more determination, forced the Turks back at the point of the bayonet, thus automatically relieving the pressure of the Turkish counter-attack against the movement of his own left wing, and brought up additional artillery. By afternoon of the third day, the whole of Abdullah Pasha's army was in wild retreat, with the exception of a few brigades of the Fourth Corps that had constituted his right wing, who gave ground slowly, foot by foot and with their faces to the enemy. For the rest, however, it was *sauve qui peut.*

The greatest battle in Europe since Sedan had been fought, and the map of the world changed anew. Worn-out and half starved after the most rapid campaign of modern times, a campaign lasting barely two weeks, the Bulgars pushed on after their retreating enemy as best they could, dogging his footsteps until within gun-shot of the Tchataldja lines. There they lay down and rested like tired dogs, tongues hanging out of their mouths, almost as spent as the frightened herd of men that had been the Turkish army. And back at Adrianople the siege-guns bellowed and roared, and mines were sprung, and again and again the Bulgars charged in unsuccessful attempts to carry its tremendous forts.

But when they found they could not carry the place by storm, they sat down to starve it out, rearing about it an outer wall of dirt and flesh and steel as impervious in its way as that inner one which had defied their efforts. If Adrianople could not be stormed, it must be isolated. That much at least was necessary, for Adrianople was the key, not only to Constantinople, but to all European Turkey. It was the key to the war.

So much for history.

III

IT WOULD seem as if everything had been done that could be done. But Fate had left a loophole for the Turks to crawl out of. Demetrieff had smashed the opposition offered to him in Central Macedonia with such ease that he minimized the possibilities of further trouble in that region. Besides, he knew that Savoff needed him. What did it matter if there were a few thousand disorganized Turkish troops left in the ragged defiles of the Despoto Dagh? The *comitadjis*, the Free Companions who had been the only bulwark of the Christian inhabitants of Turkey against the Moslem masters before the war, could be relied upon to keep these fragments on the run until the Greeks sent up help from Salonika.

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So he called in a *voivode** named Mileff—Peter Mileff, was his whole name—a great, brawny man, six feet one in his cowhide sandals, who knew that tangle of mountains for hundreds of miles as a cityman knows his backyard. This man Mileff was a leader among the *voivodes* of the *comitadjis* or *chetniks*†, who had been maintained in Macedonia by the Revolutionary Committee of Three that sat in Sofia. And as a matter of course, the *comitadjis* fought shoulder to shoulder with their Christian brethren against the Turks.

They were irregulars, though, and the Bulgarian officers were inclined to look down upon them, admitting, of course, that they were good enough fellows and dependable in a pinch; but still lacking in discipline and the technique of strategy—an estimate which the *chetniks* naturally resented. They had bested the Turkish *askares*‡ in many a fight, and knew their own value—as did the Turks.

Therefore Mileff's face was not pleasant when he stepped into Demetrieff's tent. The most he expected was another wigging because his men had taken some chickens from a Pomak farmer. Instead, Demetrieff, a short, fat little man, but a great fighter—his soldiers called him "Napoleon" Demetrieff—explained the situation to him, and ended by asking if he would accept command of the combined forces of the *comitadjis*, and be responsible to King Ferdinand for the holding of the conquered territory.

So surprised was Mileff at this great honor, they say, that he stammered and stuttered a full minute, a way he had when excited, before he could mumble an acceptance through his scraggly red beard.

"Ye-ye-e-es, General," he managed finally to say.

"I don't think you'll have any trouble," Demetrieff went on. "The *askares* have been so soundly thrashed that they are not likely to attempt anything for a long time to come, and by then the Greeks will have gotten into Salonika and be able to spare us some men."

"I don't want any Greek help, your Excellency," exclaimed Mileff, his beard bristling with the hatred all Macedonia Bulgars feel for Greeks, even when they are allied in arms with them.

Demetrieff laughed.

"That is well, *voivode*," he answered. "We Bulgars must win this war by ourselves."

Mileff hesitated a moment.

"Excellency," he said, "how many guns do you leave us?"

"Guns?" Demetrieff looked at him in surprise. "I can not leave you any guns!"

"But that is not well to leave us without guns," replied the *voivode*. "We must have some guns—a few. Mountain-guns would be best."

Demetrieff drummed on his camp-desk.

"Nonsense, man, I can't leave you artillery," he said, impatiently. "It's impossible. We shall need every piece we have over there at Adrianople."

"Then you are asking me to do the impossible," asserted Mileff, quietly. "Without guns I can not guard your flank."

"I'm not asking you to guard my flank," snapped Demetrieff. "I'm simply leaving you as a matter of form to occupy conquered territory."

Mileff rose to his feet.

"That is true, your Excellency," he said. "Yet I shall have to guard your flank. From all sides the Turks are being driven back. The Greeks are driving them from the South, the Montenegrins from the West, the Serbs from the North. Suppose some man should make an army out of these fragments? I should have hard work holding him, and I could not do it without guns."

"If anything like that happens, you will send for me," ordered Demetrieff. "As I said, I can not spare you any of my artillery. It would be as much as my commission is worth. But this I will do for you. There are some Turkish guns we captured near Seres, and you may have a battery of those with as much ammunition as you choose. I will leave a couple of sergeants to instruct your men how to handle them. But if you encounter any serious movements of the enemy I shall expect you to communicate with me or with General Savoff."

The next day Demetrieff marched to the eastward, where the thunder of the guns around Adrianople was already muttering low over the horizon, and Mileff and his *comitadjis* were left to hold Nevrokop, Melnik, Seres and the other *rayons* of Central Macedonia. To the south of them,

Voivode—local chief.

†*Comitadjis* or *chetniks*—revolutionary or (as in this case) guerrilla bands.

‡*Askares*—Turkish regular troops.

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THE *COMITADJI* COUNTRY

Fate was busily stacking the cards for a new deal.

IV

WAS IT happened, there was one coherent body of Turkish troops in Macedonia of which the Bulgarians had no inkling. Izzet Bey, with 5,000 men, had been despatched from Constantinople shortly after hostilities began, to reïnforce the garrisons dispersed by Demetrieff. He had come too late to do anything more than collect the scattered fragments of the corps routed by the Bulgars, but Izzet Bey was one of the cleverest officers in the Turkish army, and he saw the possibilities that lay in using his own command as a nucleus around which to rally the wreckage of the disastrous campaign.

All he asked was quiet, and sufficient time to reform the shattered battalions that drifted to his standard, reëstablish discipline and formulate a definite plan of action. Effectually guarded by a screen of mounted scouts and outposts, he successfully eluded detection in a mountainous district inhabited solely by Mohammedan hillmen and gipsies. But he knew all that went on through his *Bashi-bazouk** patrols that scoured the countryside, and he heard of Demetrieff's departure within a few hours.

He heard likewise of the appointment of Peter Mileff, *voivode* of the *comitadjis*, and of the battle at Lule Burgas and the flight of Abdullah Pasha's army to Constantinople. He heard of the assaults on Adrianople, and at night his outposts on the northeastern hills could hear the faint quivers in the air that were the vibrations of the monster cannonade around the beleaguered city.

**Bashi-bazouks*—Turkish irregulars.

He heard that Savoff had drained the besieging army of every available man and gun, so that he might bring a more powerful array to the attack on the Tchataldja lines. He heard that the *enceinte* of the fortress had been so weakened that Servia had been called on for help.

And then he knew that the time had come for him to strike, before the Servian reïnforcements could come up.

By this time, Izzet Bey had collected 10,000 men, mostly infantry, with a few squadrons of horse, and twenty-four guns. He reasoned that if he made a quick push toward Adrianople, warning the garrison in advance by wireless telegraph of his approach, and directed a vigorous attack upon the besiegers' rear, while simultaneously the garrison made a determined sortie, it might be possible to create a panic in the Bulgarian army and put it to flight. From his private advices, he knew that the united strength of the garrison and his own command would not be far below that of the besieging army. It was a daring scheme, and well conceived. Also, Izzet Bey was the man to execute it, if any man could.

Like Demetrieff, however, he left out of consideration the only factor that was really dangerous. He did not bother to reckon upon Mileff and his *chetniks*. If it was possible, the Turk hoped to dodge the *chetniks*. If not, then he confidently expected to brush them aside. He had not gone many miles before he realized that his first hope was useless. Once outside the limited area of Moslem settlement, it was impossible to conceal the movements of such a large body of men from the numerous Christian villages, and a dozen couriers were sent hotfoot to Mileff to warn him that a Turkish

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army was coming from the south, advancing along the valley of the Mesta.

That night a rival army rose up across the path the Turks were traveling and on both its flanks. All night the Moslem bivouacs were troubled by snipers who lay in the surrounding hills and picked off sentries and all who went near the camp-fires. In the morning it became necessary for Izzet to have out his artillery to shell the hills, and even after that a few reckless youngsters stuck to their posts, and raised Cain with their enemy's nerves. On the march, it was the same way. A damp, drizzling rain clouded the hills, and the panting columns sloshed through seas of mud, while always the distant crackle of musketry dinned in their ears, as the flanking-parties engaged the enemy. Now and then, a couple of cannon would appear on some distant height and pitch whirring shrapnel shells through the mists into the masses packed in the road.

By the end of that day, Izzet Bey was angry. The opposition had not been sufficiently strong to check his advance for a minute, but its viciousness had discouraged his troops and worn them out. Also, he could not afford to be burdened down with a train of wounded.

So, when morning came, he took up a position on a ridge of hills in battle-array, cannon emplaced, firing-line entrenched, reserves in hand, and waited. He waited all morning and all afternoon, until just before sunset, when a furious uproar burst out on his left-flank rear, and the Anatolian regiment holding that post reeled back on its supports, shattered and broken by a hell of fire that had lashed it from all sides.

Then the attack ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

Had Izzet Bey known it, he might have been interested in the plight of Mileff at this moment. The Captain of the Free Companions had despatched his messengers far and near to bring in all *chetniks* and volunteers who could be armed, but as yet he had less than 1,200 men and the battery of cannon Demetrieff had loaned him.

By skilful disposition of this meager force he had made it seem much larger than it really was. But he knew that he must adopt other means if he was to delay the Turks long enough to achieve his purpose—their complete capture or annihilation.

Therefore he had welcomed the stand of Izzet Bey and encouraged it until it was too late for the Turks to march that day. Hour by hour, reïnforcements trickled in, and by morning he hoped to be able to essay the desperate plan which he had decided upon.

THE next morning, when the Turkish bugles blew, the hillsides opposite them were bare of men. Scouts reported the road clear, and Izzet Bey cautiously resumed his march, with a strong advance-guard some distance ahead of his main body. The road here branched off from the valley of the Mesta and entered a series of dark and gloomy defiles. They were in the mouth of the trap, but never was a trap more innocent in appearance. The enemy had vanished. No more did snipers from the hillsides pick off the officers. No more did cannon miles off behind some shadowy peak throw shells with deadly effect and then disappear before retribution could be visited upon them.

The Turks could not understand the situation, but they pushed ahead with the caution dictated by experience. Presently the head of the column debouched from the last of the defiles on to a gentle slope above a grassy valley, and then they saw—or thought they saw—the explanation of their uninterrupted march.

The opposite hillside as far as the eye could see was covered with the ensigns, and bright, flaring costumes of the *comitadjis*. Red, white and green, the Bulgarian colors flashed in a hundred combinations against a dark background of rolling pine-forest. Obviously the Free Companions were prepared to give battle. The commander of the advance-guard sent back word to the commander-in-chief.

Slowly, the long column of Turkish troops filed out of the depths of the pass and took up their positions, while Izzet Bey and his staff studied the enemy through their binoculars. It was already late in the afternoon, and they questioned the advisability of attack. But, even as they debated, a puff of smoke rose from the verge of the forest and the whine of a shell whistled through the air. Simultaneously the array of opponents across the valley sank to the ground and disappeared. Izzet Bey was impressed—more particularly when the first shell was followed by a number of others, and the crackling clatter of rifle-fire.

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Here was the real opposition, he felt. Smash this once and for all, and his path would be clear. He could relieve Adrianople, add the garrison to his army and—who knows?—march straight on Sofia.

Izzet Bey smiled. He saw all his troubles vanishing. These fools of *comitadjis* had presumed to attempt to stand up before him. Well, they should take their medicine, then. He turned to one of his aides:

"Order the Chief of Artillery to fetch up his guns at once, and bid the troops dig field-entrenchments. We will attack."

With a clank of trace-chains and thudding of hoofs, the guns wheeled out of the pass and into position just behind the brow of the declivity. The long lines of infantry spread out along the slope, seeking cover behind every available shrub and boulder, and blazing away at the opposing pine-forest, whence now and then came a flurry of shots in reply and an occasional shell. Two men in each squad labored with the entrenching-tools while their comrades kept down the enemy's fire. When their cannon began to roar, the *askares* all along the line were comfortably sprawled in shallow pits that formed a capital protection against small projectiles.

Izzet Bey and his Chief of Artillery stood in a tiny clump of dwarf pines near the mouth of the pass, studying the *comitadjis'* front.

"If you will observe, Effendi," the artilleryman was saying, "the enemy's gun-fire so far has come entirely from his right wing. But if I am not mistaken he is purposely trying to mislead us. Through my glasses I can discern what appears to be a masked battery over to the left, with which he probably plans to enfilade us if we charge."

Izzet Bey trained his binoculars on the spot indicated.

"So?" he said. "Yes, I think you are right. How many pieces do you make out?"

The artilleryman counted slowly.

"It's a slovenly job," he remarked scornfully—he was one of the smart young officers of the neo-European type, who had gained his education in Germany. "The concealment is farcically inadequate. One, two, three, four—I can count ten on a front of not more than half a mile."

"Order your guns to concentrate upon them," said Izzet Bey. "We will see if we can draw their fire."

"Better than that, Effendi," answered the Chief of Artillery, as he sprang to obey the command. "We shall silence them in short order."

PRESENTLY, the Turkish batteries, which had been slowly searching the pine-forest with shrapnel, concentrated their undivided attention upon the strip of the enemy's front edged by the muzzles of the masked battery, which even through the glass appeared only as black specks behind screens of earth, covered over with tree-boughs and bushes.

The yellow puffs of smoke that marked where the shells detonated became more frequent than one could possibly count. They burst over, around, behind and in front of the enemy's guns with a deadly rapidity that was absolutely appalling. It seemed impossible that anything could live under such a cannonade. Three of the black dots already had been hurled end-on into the air. But no reply came from the hostile guns. Even the fire from the other parts of the *comitadjis'* front had dwindled to a sporadic fusillade.

"We have silenced them, Effendi," cried the artillery-officer, as he galloped his horse up to where Izzet Bey stood.

A great cheer went up from the Turkish lines. Here was the kind of fighting worth while, when the enemy took the pounding. It was vastly different from what they had been getting before Izzet Bey took command. And while the Commander-in-Chief did not cheer, the expression of his face showed that he enjoyed the triumph as much as his men.

"Have the buglers sound the Charge," he called to his aides. "The whole line will advance."

Then the shrill, insistent notes of the bugles pierced the crash of the guns, and the Turkish infantry leaped to their feet. The colors were unfurled and advanced, and the lines went forward, officers ahead, with drawn swords in one hand, revolvers in the other—long, gently swaying lines, fez-topped and crowned with sparkling ridges of light that flashed from the bayonets. Behind the center rode Izzet Bey and his staff, in obedience to the tradition of the Turkish army which says that a commander shall share the danger of his troops. This is a tradition which has gone out of fashion in Christendom and among the bulk

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of the modern Turks, but occasionally you will find an *Osmanli* who holds true to the customs of his forefathers.

Overhead the shells from the Turkish guns whistled and shrieked toward the position of the *comitadjis*, and the roar of the cannonade reverberated sonorously between the surrounding mountains, multiplied a hundred times by the recurring echoes. But in the excitement of the moment none noticed the total cessation of the enemy's fire. Nearer and nearer they drew to the ominous line of the pine-forest. In any mood but the one of mad exultation that drove them from a walk to a trot and from a trot to a run, they would have marked that silence as doubly sinister, fraught with the threat of hidden danger. But in the excitement none paused to wonder.

All they thought of was victory. Once more the Crescent should triumph over these cursed Bulgar pigs, once more the might of Islam should prevail against the *giaours*.

Victory! Victory! "Allah-Allah-il-Allah!"

The cry that had resounded before the gates of Vienna back in the seventeenth century rose with the shrill ferocity of a wolf-pack's yell.

And yet they were greeted only by silence. Behind them the Turkish guns had ceased to roar, for fear of hitting the advancing lines. There was silence the length and breadth of the valley. Those in advance hesitated, in momentary uncertainty. But the lines behind pushed them forward. The dark mass of the forest overshadowed them now, as they pressed up the breast of the gentle slope that led to its marge, and still there was no lashing hail of lead such as they had expected.

Only silence.

The shoving, panting lines of men slowed to a walk, awed against their will by this reception. But the officers turned and urged them forward. The bugles shrilled again, with a fierce, exultant note.

"On, on!" they sang. And the *askares* leaped forward with a will. Now, the bayonet. A *hovjee** battalion, in the lead, breasted the slope and plunged into the depths of the forest. Simultaneously, a thunderous boom sounded from far off to the left.

The lines stiffened and advanced once more at a run. Perhaps the punishment was about to begin, after all. In one mighty surge, they poured over the line of rude earthworks and into the forest aisles.

HERE and there lay a body, crouched over in the stiff, huddled posture of the man who has met his death unexpectedly. On all sides lay masses of gay clothing, apparently thrown hastily aside. At first glance, each heap represented a man, but closer inspection revealed it to be hung upon sticks. The Turks had carried a breastwork manned by a few dead men and an army of scarecrows!

Nor was this all. Where the "masked battery" had stood, lay a line of crudely painted logs, some still projecting over the top of the breastworks, in the semblance of cannon, some lying on their sides or sticking in the earth, where they had been thrown by Izzet Bey's shells.

There was but one trophy. The troops that had carried the right end of the position discovered a single field-piece, carefully emplaced behind a screen of trees, its breech-block gone and limber missing. This and the few dead men along the edge of the forest represented the spoils of victory.

It was too much. Izzet Bey cursed and swore. His officers were purple in the face. His troops were like wild men. A whole day had been wasted. Vast quantities of priceless ammunition had been fired away. He had even lost a few men—and men were valuable to him. Every day, every cartridge, every man's life was needed if his great plan was to be carried out, if Adrianople was to be relieved and the fortune of war turned by a single daring coup.

V

TO THESE men, who had fancied themselves daring annihilation in their dash across the open, it was as if Allah had laughed in their faces. They cringed under the reaction from the tense strain. What had been a coherent array of fighting-men, animated by verve and *esprit de corps*, degenerated into a disappointed, wrangling mass. Officers waded into the confusion, trying to beat the men into ranks with the flats of their swords.

And suddenly in the midst of the turmoil a spattering crackle of rifle-fire smote their

*Hovjees—sharpshooters; most of whom are hunters.

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ears, drifting from the direction whence they had just come. Izzet Bey and his staff trotted to the edge of the forest, binoculars poised. But they did not need glasses to take in the situation. Out of the woods that fringed the pass through which the Turks had come poured streams of *comitadjis*. Already they had overpowered and bayoneted the squads of artillerymen around half the pieces. None of the batteries had time to limber up and attempt to escape across the valley. Before the teams could be hitched, the *comitadjis* would intervene, charging down upon the gunners in bayonet-tipped waves.

Izzet Bey scarcely appreciated what had happened when the long line of guns on the opposite ridge began to roar again, this time sweeping their former masters with a hellish fire of shrapnel. True, the men who directed the fire were not expert gunners, and their range adjustment left much to be desired from the point of view of the professional artillerist. But they had a sufficiently large target, and it was physically impossible for men who knew anything at all about shooting to avoid dropping their shells somewhere in the expanse of wood, every square rod of which sheltered cowering *askares*, frightened out of their wits by the bewildering sequence of events.

The attackers had become the attacked. What had seemed after all a very sad joke began to assume the aspect of a disaster. It was a situation that would have appalled any man but one with nerves of iron. Izzet Bey had nerves of iron, however. Also, he was a born general. He did not lose his head for a moment in the bedlam of superstitious fear that broke out among his troops, especially in the battalions whose morale had been sapped by previous defeats. With a handful of courageous officers, he rode from one organization to another, begging, ordering, exhorting, pleading.

At last he found an *ulema*, or military chaplain, and with his help rallied several of his own Asiatic battalions, and formed them into a thin firing-line in the hasty trenches along the edge of the wood that had been abandoned by the *comitadjis*. Behind these men he set to work to reorganize his scattered and demoralized forces. It was not an easy task, more particularly when the entire position was being raked by the vicious fire of twenty-four guns that the *askares* knew had formerly belonged to them.

There was something especially cruel in that fact alone. It made great strong peasants ready to weep in childish vexation at the unkindness of Allah, convinced, indeed, that it was *Kismet* that the *giaours* should prevail.

Why not, when they had won all the battles? Surely, whispered the men of the European battalions—who had already felt the weight of "Napoleon" Demetrieff's arm —surely, there was some curse on the *Osmanli*, some bygone sin for which Allah was visiting this terrible punishment. Of what use, then, was it to struggle?

Realizing the need of shaking off this inertia, Izzet Bey gathered his cavalry in hand and prepared for a grand-stand play, the effect of which he designed to be in the way of an inspiration for his lethargic infantry, rather than a stroke for victory. He had only a few squadrons, but they were as good a body of men as you could find in the whole army—and those who know Turkish cavalry in the field know that man for man it is as good as any cavalry in Europe. Ill-horsed, poorly equipped and none too well-drilled, still they had the confidence inspired by generations of equestrian ancestors, and absolute fearlessness of any opposition.

But even their phlegmatic courage could not withstand the torments that lashed them. Whole squadrons were blown to pieces in full gallop, and the few who managed to penetrate the lines of the *comitadjis* were bayoneted or shot down before they could do any harm. A meager remnant rode back to the shelter of the pine-trees, and Izzet Bey, after counting up his losses, found himself the gainer by no more than an act of heroic foolhardiness, the very cost of which made his discouraged troops quiver anew under the whip.

Yet he refused to be daunted. The cavalry charge had given him more time to rally his infantry, and he had all his battalions under fair control. By a carefully directed small-arms fire he managed to compel the *comitadji* gunners to withdraw from the advanced positions to which the captured artillery had been pushed, and he instinctively seized this moment to press his advantage home.

Led by their *ulemas*, the Asiatic battalions broke from the protection of the trees

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at a run, and in short, desperate rushes tried to jam their way across the awful zone of death that had been cast about the mouth of the pass—that narrow, bottle-necked passage which, had they but known it, meant life and death to the Turks.

But it was of no avail. A clear half-mile the *askares* forced their way, with grim courage that took no account of the price of their progress. But at a certain point they found it utterly impossible to advance. It was as if some giant swung a pendulum of steel, a monstrous battering-ram, back and forth against this point.

The bravest men who gained it took a single step farther, and then felt the hot blast of death itself, like the breath of a living thing, flecking their cheeks with crimson dew.

They crumbled; platoons and companies and battalions and individuals crumbled into atoms, blasted out of existence. It was physically impossible for men to live under such conditions. Like the remnant of the cavalry, the Turkish infantry retired —what was left of it—to the shelter of the pines.

Izzet Bey wiped the sweat from his forehead as he watched it. His fortunes had entered upon another stage. It was no longer a question of retaking the guns. It was a question of saving as many as possible of his force from utter disaster.

SUMMONING his staff, he rode hastily through the forest along the continuation of the rough road that had led through the fatal pass. Presently, it debouched upon the banks of a broad river. Before him was the abutment of a bridge that still smoked. Its ruins bore mute testimony to the source of the single thunderous roar that had greeted the *askares* when they chased the Free Companions from their forest lair. On the slopes above the opposite bank of the stream the shrubbery was dotted with occasional dabs of color and, without any warning, a cannon-shot sent them scurrying back to cover, to watch a shell sail overhead into the heart of the wood.

Evidently, there was no passage here.

Izzet Bey turned his horse without a word, and rode up-stream a way. He was beginning to suspect his predicament. Therefore he made no murmur, like the members of his staff, when he came presently to a spot where a second stream flowed into the first at a right angle. This second stream was not so broad, but it was terribly swift, a mountain-torrent that dashed at breakneck speed over its rocky bed, and there was not a sign of a bridge as far as the eye could see. Moreover, the opposite woods bristled with additional riflemen—undoubtedly backed up by artillery, Izzet Bey told himself. Without a covering fire from artillery of their own, he knew, the best-trained troops in the world could not ford that torrent. What chance had his men, dispirited, broken, short of ammunition?

He shrugged his shoulders, and turned to his Chief of Staff.

"The map, Colonel," he said, briefly.

The Chief of Staff, a smart, alert young officer, also of the new school, unfolded the map on his chief's saddle-bow and, standing beside him, pointed out their position with a pencil.

"Here, Effendi," he indicated. "Where I have made the X. That is the confluence of the Mesta and the Kavala. It forms a triangle, as it were, with this line of hills through which we passed as the base. We are in the triangle in the place marked X. On one side of us are the hills held by the enemy with our lost artillery; on our right is the Mesta and on our left the Kavala. It is a *cul-de-sac*."

Izzet Bey sat for a long time hunched over in his saddle, thinking. Once he cupped his hand to his ear, and inclined his head toward the east whence came the throbbing mutter of a gigantic cannonade, the pulse-beat of the conflict for Adrianople. On the opposite bank of the river, a few curious *comitadjis* had come down to the edge of the current to glance across at the little knot of Turkish officers. They made no hostile move. By their very forbearance, the Turkish general realized, they proved their confidence.

"There are no fords indicated?" he said, finally, with a glance at the map.

"Effendi," replied the Chief of Staff, "we have not ten rounds of ammunition a man. What chance would we have of firing a passage? And there are no fords at this season after such rains as we had last week."

He spoke simply and without emotion, as men do at such times; but his face and the faces of the other officers in the group mirrored the tragedy in their hearts.

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Izzet Bey turned his horse and rode back along the way he had come. A spasm of pain shot across his face.

"I would not have minded so much if they had been regulars," he muttered. "But this——"

VI

"NAPOLEON" DEMETRIEFF crouched forward in his chair over the camp-desk, pounding on its surface and glaring at his staff.

"But this I must know," he exclaimed, explosively. "I tell you I must. All of yesterday our scouts reported heavy cannon-firing in the Despoto Dagh. We have no information that the enemy is in force in the Despoto Dagh. We have been led to believe there were no Turks left in that region. Here is a mystery—and mysteries are not good in war."

The members of his staff frowned and tried to look wise.

"If I only could get hold of Mileff!" resumed Demetrieff. "Dolt that he is, he was to warn me if anything happened after we left him."

The little General got up and went to the door of the rough farmhouse that formed his headquarters far in the rear of the right flank of the Bulgarian army hemming in Constantinople, so far in the rear that he was well within sound of the guns about Adrianople. As he stood there, the sergeant of the guard came up and saluted with the respectful familiarity that all his troops entertained for Demetrieff.

"See, my General," he said, "there is a rough dirty fellow of a *comitadji* here, who would see you. He calls himself Voivode Peter Mileff."

"Dolt! Pig!" bellowed Demetrieff. "Bring him to me at once."

And back he strode into the room, spurs and saber clanking, while the sergeant went away highly delighted that he had elicited so much attention from his General. When the non-commissioned officer returned, he was walking beside a tall, gaunt man, whose lined face and blazing eyes told of hunger and sleeplessness, and who leaned his rifle against the door-sill and walked into the headquarters room without removing his hat.

"Well," snapped Demetrieff, "what about this uproar on my flank yesterday?"

"A little battle, *guspodine*," answered the leader of the Free Companions. "We *comitadjis* were fighting for our own hands."

"What force opposed you?" Demetrieff's voice cracked like a whip.

"Ten thousand men and twenty-four guns," said Mileff.

He spoke quietly, with a tired inflection.

"What?"

The Bulgarian General leaned across the table in his interest, and a rustle swept the room.

"What? Do you know what you are saying? There was no such force left on our flank when we marched east."

"But it was there afterward," replied Mileff, patiently. "It was as I said it would be. The right man came along and formed an army out of the fragments that escaped you. They were marching toward Adrianople when we met them."

"What force had you?"

"Fifteen hundred men and perhaps two thousand women and boys. I want some soldiers to guard my prisoners, Excellency."

"You shall have them," promised Demetrieff. "How many prisoners did you take?"

"All—all that were alive!"

The little General stared at him. The staff gaped incredulously. Then, crying, "I shall commend you to the Czar," Demetrieff held out his hand.

"I have had my reward," returned Mileff.

"What is that?" asked the Bulgarian General.

"Hark!" Mileff held up his hand.

And all heard, even more distinctly than had Izzet Bey in the depths of the Despoto Dagh, the far-off, remorseless thunder of the guns that roared about Adrianople. Never ceasing, there was in this tumult of ruthless sound a suggestion of finality, of unceasing vigilance that would not be denied.

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The Little Yellow Men

A Crisis of the Pacific Coast

by John Kenneth Turner

SYNOPSIS—Ward Elder, a strongly built, cheerful, red-headed youngster of twenty-two, drifts from New England to California. **He boxes in some** preliminaries, but leaves the fight-game and works in the packing-houses at Fresno. **He meets Isola Kent,** the pretty chief-packer; and an ex-journalist named Crowe, who is becoming a labor-leader. **From** them Ward learns of the menace of the organized Jap hordes to California. **The Japs are crowding out white** labor by pooling their interests. Ward is guided through Chinatown and Japtown by **"Handsome Jack,"** an opium-fiend. He meets a beautiful high-caste Jap girl, Toku; her father, Hamagawa; and her suitor, Osaiki. Hamagawa and Osaiki pretend to be ordinary merchants, but they look like army officers, and are much honored by the Japs. These two lose a mysterious yellow paper, like a map. **Ward Elder finds it,** and is pursued by the Japs, but gets away.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE HOME OF HAMAGAWA

DURING the three weeks following Ward Elder made little progress with the problem of who Hamagawa and Osaiki really were—what was their power. The inevitable clash of races, a whirlpool of hatred and contention, came. First, it was purely economical. Its effect was to change Ward, overnight, from a "fruit-hustler" in Sarkelian's packing-house, to a raisin-picker in the hot, shimmering vineyard of the Ramey place, four miles southeast of the city.

Over the violent protest of the growers, the Japanese pickers had raised their prices to three cents a tray and for a full week they picked grapes triumphantly with remuneration at from three to five dollars a day.

But by their latest inroads into the profits of the growers, the brown invaders overreached themselves. The growers rose in revolt. To such centers of population as San Francisco and Los Angeles they sent out a call for white laborers, promising big wages and a long job. They even ran special free excursion-trains to tempt the people to leave such other employment as they might have, to hurry to Fresno to share in the prosperity of the rich and fruitful San Joaquin Valley.

The result was a tremendous influx of laborers, many of whom brought their families, their household goods, their all, with them. Camptown itself was almost depopulated of men. Only men with families that had been lucky enough to find work in the packing-houses preferred to remain there, in order to be with their families. In order to retain a sufficient number even of these, the packing-house proprietors found it necessary to raise laborers' wages from one dollar and a half to two dollars a day.

As Crowe had pointed out, the relative position of American and Asiatic labor was reversed. It was American labor that was cheap now, Asiatic labor that was dear. Because it was dear, the Asiatic labor was locked out; the whites went to work at a slight decrease of wages, and for a brief period reveled in incomes equal to that of the ordinary skilled mechanic.

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Such was the first step in the clash of races. The Japanese, for their part, retired quietly to their camps to await developments. They had controlled the situation so long that they were slow to believe that the growers would be able to dispense with their services. For two whole weeks they waited—until it became a certainty that the raisin-crop could be harvested without their help. Then they acted.

Their former picking-price was three cents a tray. The Americans had taken their places at two and one-half. The Japs offered to work for two and one-half, then for two. The bait was too tempting for the majority of the growers. They gave the whites first call on the places, but announced that, since market-prospects were bad, they could not afford to pay more than the bottom price. The white pickers could accept two cents a tray or give way to the Japanese.

The announcement of the cut sent a hot wave of anger through the camps of the pickers—anger at the growers for importing them under promises of giving them one wage and then offering them less, and anger at the Japanese for causing so much bread to be taken from their mouths. The first general impulse was to quit the vineyards in a body, but when they asked themselves where they would go, and when they thought of the grinning Japanese triumphantly taking their jobs and themselves on the highways looking for other work and not finding it, their anger centered fiercely against the Japanese.

Meetings were held about camp-fires and much strong talk was indulged in. At the Ramey place, where Crowe, Carmichael and Ward had gone together, the meeting was prolonged far into the night and every phase of the Japanese labor-question was discussed at length. At this meeting it developed that Crowe had a tremendous amount of statistics on the subject, and during the discussion the other pickers came to look to him for the final word on every point. Incendiary talk, running high, was quieted by Crowe, and it was on his advice that the campers finally agreed to meet the cut of the Japs and pick at two cents a tray, instead of two and one-half.

And this turned out to be the course generally adopted by the white pickers elsewhere. Misery finding itself in much company, the spirits of the Ramey pickers revived and they even jested upon the matter and gloated over the fact that the wage-cutting of the little yellow man had availed him nothing.

"What will the Japs do now, poor things?" boisterously queried a young woman, as the pickers were spreading out over the rows at sunrise Monday morning.

The answer came quickly. As they lunched in the shade of the eucalyptus-trees that noon, George Ramey passed back and forth among his employees. He announced that their work had been entirely satisfactory, but that the Japanese had offered to pick the remainder of the season's crop of raisins for one and one-half cents a tray, and that if they wished to retain their jobs they would have to meet the figure.

THE white laborers on the Ramey ranch—as on very many others—moved back to Camptown. They wasted few words, but sullenly packed up their belongings and left. They left hurriedly; for they knew that the only hope of obtaining work in the overflowing packing-houses lay in their reaching the city ahead of the bands of laborers who would be trooping in from other vineyards.

Crowe, Carmichael and Ward Elder journeyed back to Camptown with the others. After pitching camp once more they tried to secure their former jobs. Failing in this, they made a round of the other packing-houses, but nowhere did they meet with success or even encouragement.

At Sarkelian's, Ward found Isola Kent in her regular place, her face as cool and serene as ever, her nimble fingers working at their accustomed speed. At the sight of him her jade-green eyes heightened in color and she gave him her hand in a swift, friendly clasp of welcome.

"So you've felt the sting of the Japanese again," she laughed. "Now don't you feel just a little more like defending your country against them?"

"I do," admitted Ward without hesitation. "I'm in favor of chasing the whole breed into the Pacific Ocean.

"But," he continued, after a moment's hesitation, "how is it that you yourself are so—so against them? What did the Japanese ever do to *you?*"

He had asked her the question once before and she had dodged it. This time she answered it.

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"Nothing, personally. But there's my brother. They ruined him."

"How was that?"

"He owned a general-merchandising store in a country town. Was making money. A Jap opened up next door. The first day the Jap took all my brother's Japanese trade and the first week he had a third of his white trade—underselling him, of course. My brother fought that Jap for a year and a half, but it was no use. They closed him out. That made it awfully hard on our family."

"That was bad," sympathized Ward. "No wonder you hate the Japs."

"That was only a single incident," asserted the girl; "not enough to prejudice me. But it helped me to notice things. I've seen how the Japs are pressing forward, how they're monopolizing one business after another. They already control the cheap-restaurant business in all the cities of the Coast. They've captured the fishing-industry and are making a hard fight to get a foothold in the salmon-canning trade in the Northwest. I've seen towns where there was hardly a shoe-repairing shop that wasn't run by a Jap. They've got into barbering, and jewelry and many other lines. The country-store business in California belongs to them now. They've taken up farming and have formed their own fruit and produce associations. The fact is, they're ruining people in all classes of society. That's why almost nobody in this Western country is in favor of the Japs any more.

"No," went on Isola, "like a good many others, I've decided that the Japs and the Americans can never live side by side on equal terms. Trouble is coming, and when it does I believe you'll be among the first to volunteer for the fight."

She shot a glance at him that made his chest swell.

"Thanks," he said. "Thanks awfully!"

WARD could not let the first night after his return to the city pass without revisiting Little Asia. It drew him to itself with a power that was irresistible. The alien sights and sounds and smells had laid their spell upon him. Besides, he was anxious to pursue the investigation that had been broken off by his journey to the vineyards.

The yellow paper he still carried, folded carefully, in the innermost compartment of his purse. He told himself that his first move must be to seek out his friend the opium-fiend, and demand of that wizard of Little Asia that he read out the meaning of it. But his feet drew him cunningly to the shuttered window of Toku Matsui, the tiny daughter of Hamagawa.

The time for playing the peeper was past now. Siftings of light through the shutters told him that some one was within. Discretion impelled him to put his eyes to one of those chinks, but a sense of honor restrained him. So he rattled the shutters softly and waited, his heart quickening. A moment and his heart leaped faster still. A soft voice, a voice that he knew, was speaking some words that he did not understand —and with a rising inflection.

"It is I," he called through the blinds. "Hello, Toku."

"Oh—you!" She opened the shutters part way.

"I thought you no come back—no more."

So she had remembered him in those three weeks! He held out his hand with an awkward, boyish movement and she touched it fleetingly.

"You lika come in?" she asked doubtfully, "Meestah—ah——"

Remembering that it was the house of Hamagawa, he hesitated, then stepped inside.

"Wahd Eldah." She made an amusing attempt to manipulate the r's. "Good name, but no easy. Toku Matsui betta name—you think so?"

"Toku Matsui is a pretty name," he assured her; "but not so pretty as the girl who bears it," he added boldly.

She raised her little palms outward in a baby-like gesture of deprecation.

"You maka much fun," she protested.

"No," he declared, taking the chair she offered. "I mean it."

"Long time you no come," Toku sighed. "Toku remembah brave 'Melican man who make good fight. Toku gif' brave man little present."

She took from the dresser a photo-button of herself and pinned it on his coat-lapel.

"You only 'Melican I gif' it to; no othah," she assured him. "Ha! ha!"

"Thanks," he said, stirred by her soft presence. "I'll wear it."

"I gif' some to Japanese gurls," she went

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on. "One I send to Jap-an. Baby seestah wear it. I think so I see baby seestah soon."

"How are you going to see her? Is she coming here or—or——"

"No can tell. Maybe so she come. Maybe so I go. Maybe so see no more. Maybe so die."

"What! Maybe you'll die? How's that? How're you going to die?"

At the apparently innocent question the girl's soft body stiffened and her liquid black eyes flashed suspicion.

"What you lika know, 'Melican?" she asked harshly. "I think you betta go."

"Oh, I didn't mean anything," he apologized. "I beg your pardon. But—well—I just wanted to know how you happened to come to America. Thought it would be interesting to know."

"Business," she replied, unbending slightly. "Faddah business. Faddah come. I come. Osaiki come. Osaiki teach me Engleesh. Osaiki know much Engleesh."

"Osaiki!" he exclaimed. "Then Osaiki's a teacher, is he?"

"Ha ha! No! Osaiki no teach. Teach only Toku. Osaiki no teach."

"Then what is he doing here?"

Again the suspicion came into her eyes.

"I no talk 'bout Osaiki," she said.

She glanced significantly toward the door, and he fancied that she was about to order him away once more. At this he was seized with a sudden impulse to take the bull by the horns. He drew his purse from the back pocket of his trousers and opened it.

"You read Japanese," he remarked. "Just tell me what this means, will you?"

He took out the yellow paper and bent toward her. She waited in her chair, looking on in mild curiosity. He unfolded the paper, smoothed it out on his knee and then held it before her eyes. She stared at it a moment, doubtfully, then comprehension flashed across her face. In astonishment she gasped, then one of her tiny hands shot out and snatched for the paper. Instinctively Ward jerked it away and she grasped but a corner of it, which was torn off.

"Gif' me! Gif' me!" she cried, springing out of her chair and snatching for the paper again and again.

But Ward easily held it out of her reach. When she saw that she could not get it, she began to scream. She screamed shrilly, screamed as a woman screams who is in animal fear of her life.

WARD'S first impulse was to run away. But he felt that it was cowardly, and he hesitated. Scream upon scream burst from Toku, scream upon scream. It seemed to Ward that all Japtown would hear, and every moment he expected to see a crowd of little yellow men streaming through the door and attacking him. A few seconds seemed, in their intensity, like many minutes. Toku still screamed, shrilly, dreadfully. Were all the Japanese in Fresno deaf that they did not come? Would Toku never stop that awful noise?

At last some one came. There was a man at the screen door. Ward recognized the face of Osaiki.

Banging open the door, the Japanese dandy sprang into the room. He looked at Toku, then at Ward, and without hesitation he sprang at the American. Instinctively Ward squared off, advancing his left arm to meet the face of Osaiki as he rushed forward. But in that moment Toku stopped screaming and sprang between.

"No! No!" she cried, facing Osaiki.

In the instant's respite Ward heard the shuffle of feet outside and excited Japanese voices. The door opened and three or four little yellow men crowded into the room. Their voices growled, but for the moment they held their passions in leash, respectful of the gestures of Toku.

Grimly Ward waited for Osaiki, who first tried to brush past the girl, then stopped to parley with her in a high key. She seemed to tell him to go away and he seemed angrily to refuse, for again he tried to brush past her. In desperation she whirled and, grasping Ward by one arm, shoved him quickly through a door into an inner room, through a hallway and to a rear exit.

Osaiki pressed her close, while behind him came the other Japanese.

"Run! Run!" whispered Toku, shoving Ward out into a tiny passageway. "Run! They kill you! They kill you! Run!"

She turned and faced Osaiki, barring the door with her body and fighting him back with clawlike movements of her little hands.

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CHAPTER VIII

A THEFT

WARD cast one hesitating glance backward over his shoulder, then ran, as he had been commanded to do. Swiftly he ran, blindly, for the way was dark. He was at full speed when he crashed into a wall which barred his path. Stunned, he staggered back. He felt about him on all sides. There was no outlet except by the route he had come. He was in a blind passageway!

He looked backward along the long, narrow alley. Several shapes were running toward him. Osaiki and his cohorts had passed little Toku and were on his trail. He leaped at the board wall at his left. His fingers closed over a cross scantling and, kicking his legs desperately, he drew himself up. Reaching higher, he found the top of the wall. It was but a high, tight, board fence. In a moment more he was on top. The pursuing forms were below him now, but he vaulted quickly into space and lighted on his feet on the ground. The wall was between him and pursuers.

He had dropped into a tiny open square, pocketed in the midst of a densely populated block. As he crossed it on the run he heard the feet of the Japanese banging against the fence as they scaled it. He plunged into a brick-walled passageway and emerged, blinking, into the glare of the best-lighted section of Jap Alley.

Directly across the alley he saw the sign, "K. Hamagawa, Cigars and Tobacco," and below he saw the father of Toku sitting behind his counter on a stool talking earnestly with—yes, it was the same—the bespectacled Japanese who had called him a spy that night in Fong Kee's. Behind this strange person, who was nodding and smiling just as he had done that night in the gambling-den, two negroes were in the act of entering the door which led to the rear of the store.

Blinking rapidly, Ward looked this way and that for a place to hide. Neither the father of Toku nor the man he held in conversation had so far observed him. Ward fancied that he heard clattering footsteps in the passageway which he had just left. Quick as the telegrams of thought, he chose his course. Crossing the alley, he brushed against the back of the bespectacled Japanese and pressed close behind the two negroes as they disappeared within the inner door.

Had Osaiki reached the alley in time to see him? If not, he was safe for a time. But was he? Was he not jumping from the frying-pan into the fire? Where were those negroes leading him?

HE PASSED a Chinaman seated on a low stool. The Celestial eyed him sleepily, displaying nothing like the feverish anxiety of the face in the wall at Fong Kee's. Past the outpost, following the negroes closely, he crossed the threshold of another door, a door opening on stairs leading downward.

Down two flights of dim stairs they traveled slowly, arriving finally in a cellar-room crowded with Chinese, Japanese, negroes and white men. Yes, there were white men there. He ought to be safe now. But such white men! Ward saw at a glance that, except for one or two, they were the dregs of society. Though Ward had almost given up finding his opium-smoker again, he half expected to see him here and now.

Lengthwise of the room extended a long table, strewn here and there with bunches of paper slips some eight or ten inches square and illumined with green characters dotted, some of them, with daubs of red and purple. In addition to the bunches of paper were saucers of liquid purple, and beside them marking-brushes. On a bench in front of the table sat a row of visitors. Behind it squatted a row of Mongolians busily engaged in daubing those funny little papers with purple. On the wall over the heads of the three were pasted scores of other similar bits of paper, each of them marked with additional signs and figures, always one large figure, sometimes a seven, sometimes an eight, now and then a nine, and one lone ten, also smaller figures, each set of which was preceded by a dollar mark.

"Jeminee!" breathed Ward to himself, forgetting his danger for the moment. "A Chink lottery-joint!"

Though the room was well filled, many of the visitors were standing, and there were numerous vacant chairs and benches. Ward found a seat in a corner. So far as he had observed, nobody had taken the slightest notice of him, and he was able to survey his surroundings with a leisurely eye. The room was little more than a barren

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den, exhibiting none of the decorations or rich furnishings that he had seen at Fong Kee's. A rope which dangled above the head of the chief dealer caught his eye and he turned to the white man who sat at his right.

"What's that rope for?" he asked bluntly.

"That?" replied the man pleasantly. "That's a signal-rope. The cops swoop down on these places once in a while, you know. When a hint of danger coming reaches him, that Chink there jerks the rope and the rope works a mechanism that slams a heavy door above. If the cops are outside trying to get in, they're stumped, and if there's somebody inside whom the Chinks want to keep here, he's caught like a rat in a trap. You must be a new one here," remarked the stranger, tentatively. "Are you playing the game to-night?"

"What? Chiney lottery, you mean? Oh, no, I don't understand it. How does it go?"

"Easy enough," replied the stranger.

He seemed very unlike the rest. True, he was roughly clothed, but no dissipation showed in his face, his voice bespoke keen intelligence and his English was good. Ward noted, as the man reached for a sample ticket which lay on a box near by, that his left hand was badly twisted and two of the fingers were missing.

"I'll just show you," went on the man. "You see, there are eighty Chinese characters on this green piece of paper. You take a brush, so, and mark spots on ten of them —any ten. At the head office of the company a drawing is held by means of a box containing eighty balls, each ball being marked to correspond with one of the characters on this ticket. Well, twenty of the balls are drawn out at random, and the drawing is indicated by punching holes on the twenty corresponding characters, blank tickets being reserved, you understand, to be punched. Now if the ten spots you have made happen to correspond with any ten of the twenty holes punched, then you've caught what is called a ten-spot. If nine correspond, you have caught a nine-spot; if eight, an eight-spot, and so on. If you get a one, two, three or four spot the Chinaman keeps your money—whatever you've paid for the ticket. But if you catch a five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten spot, you win. On a dollar-ticket a five-spot pays you $2; a six-spot, $20; a seven, $185; an eight, $930; a nine, $1,860 and a ten, $3,720. That's all there is to it. Try your luck. You might catch a ten-spot." But he laughed as he said it.

"Oh, I don't know," returned Ward doubtfully. "Fact is, I've never gambled in all my life, so far."

"This is a queer place for you to be in, then," remarked the other, with a tinge of sarcasm.

The time set for the last drawing of the evening was not far off, and most of the patrons soon finished buying their tickets and lounged about on the benches, smoking, or stood in groups, exchanging exaggerated stories of previous winnings or losses. Ward, listening eagerly, slipped one hand in his pocket and went to fingering nervously a half-dollar which he found there.

"ONLY one minute more!" called the chief dealer, as he hurried to finish the copying of his second duplicates, which must be turned in at the head office before the drawing should take place. The warning cry was too much for Ward. Stepping over to the table, he reached for a blank and a marking-pot, and in a moment ten of the Chinese hieroglyphics had been daubed with purple, the dealer had tossed his half-dollar into a drawer and was swiftly preparing the duplicates.

Carefully Ward folded his precious green ticket and placed it in his purse beside the mysterious yellow paper, then returned again to his corner to stare dreamily at the ceiling through the smoke which rose from many lighted cigarettes. He had played the lottery. Would he win? What sort of luck had he? He did not know. Others had won ten-spots. Why shouldn't he?

$3,720 was the prize for a ten-spot on a dollar ticket! That meant $1,860 for a fifty-cent ticket. What would he do with $1,860? It did not mean as much to Ward as it would to many others, and yet he could see how it might mean a great deal. He wished for the money and through the stress of his wishing he created a faith that it would come.

Ward saw the messenger carrying the precious duplicates dash out and soon afterward he heard the clock on the wall strike slowly the hour of ten. From the first stroke to the last he felt that the members of that motley assemblage were holding

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their breaths, and he, too, held his breath. At that very moment the evening's luck of one and all was being decided by the little wooden balls.

The period between the striking of the clock and the return of the messenger, though but a few minutes, passed like hours. The suppressed excitement in the room was too great for speech and the silence was unbroken.

Finally a quick step sounded on the stairs and an instant later the messenger reappeared. He held a bunch of "drawings" in his hands and, as he spread them out on one end of the table, the silence gave way to a hubbub; the ticket-holders crowded forward to learn whether they had marked to win or to lose.

All gathered about the long table save Ward Elder. Ward stayed in his corner. He watched the others as they compared their bits of paper. He noted the joy that overspread the features of two or three who had made a winning and the disappointment of those who had played to lose, most of whom tore up their tickets with a curse and stamped up the stairs and out of sight.

Only when the crowd about the table had thinned to a half-dozen did Ward, with an effort to appear unconcerned, leave his corner and come forward. With unsteady hands he picked up one of the drawings and examined it. He could not remember the spots upon his ticket, so was unable to tell whether or not he had won. And yet, such is the faith of the gambler in the casting of his first die, that he could not believe that he had lost. His body tingling with excitement, he drew out his purse, opened it and brought forth his little green ticket, and, unthinking, the yellow paper with it. He spread out the ticket and slipped it under the perforated "drawing" as he had seen the others do. He drew a deep breath; for of the twenty holes in the "drawing" but two were closed with a daub of purple. He had caught but a two-spot. He had lost.

Ward sat there at the table fingering his ticket and the unlucky drawing, turning the two bits of paper over and over, turning them this way and that, matching them sidewise and upside down, as well as upright—all in the idle hope that he had made a mistake, that he might eventually learn that he had won, after all. His eye fell upon the purse and he snapped it shut and dropped it into his pocket. The yellow paper lay on the table before him and without any purpose in the act he turned from his ticket and unfolded it, spreading it out on the table and staring at its lines and dots and arrows and the Japanese writing upon it.

"H'm! What do you call that?"

TURNING, Ward looked into the face of the stranger who had talked with him in the corner—the man with the crippled fingers. The man was looking over his shoulder upon the yellow paper. At another time Ward would have hidden the paper away, but now he shoved it toward his questioner.

"That's more than I can tell you," he replied. "Maybe *you* can tell *me*. Take a look at it and see."

The man examined the paper closely.

"Seems to be a map," he ventured. "H'm! Made by a Japanese. A map of—of—— Say, boy, where'd you get this, anyhow?"

"Oh, I found it one night—found it in Chiney Alley," he answered. "What do you make of it?"

"Give it to me, will you?" asked the man, disregarding the question. "Of course," he added, "it isn't worth anything. It doesn't amount to anything, but I'd just like to study it out, anyhow."

"Study it out and tell me," suggested Ward. "I'm interested, too."

"Haven't time," urged the man. "I've got to be getting out of here. Give it to me now and I'll let you know next time I see you. It's nothing but a map, you know."

"No, I guess I'll keep it," decided Ward, starting to fold the paper preparatory to putting it away.

"Tell you what I'll do," proposed the man. "I'm so interested in that paper that I'll just give you a dollar for it."

"A dollar!" ejaculated Ward. "What's the use of throwing away a dollar on a worthless bit of paper?"

"Well, I'm willing to give it to you."

Which reinforced Ward's conviction that the paper really was worth something.

"No," he decided curtly and folding the paper, shoved it into the side pocket of his coat.

The stranger did not urge him, but went

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to talking about other things—about lotteries and other forms of Chinese gambling. He told several humorous anecdotes and guffawed at them himself, slapping Ward a number of times upon the shoulder. Ward thought that the man had become noticeably familiar, but he suspected him of no ulterior motives until the other had gone. Then, slipping a hand into his pocket with the notion of transferring the paper again to his purse, he failed to find it.

"He's picked my pocket! The fellow has picked my pocket!" Ward told himself, with a sinking feeling.

He dashed out of the room and up the stairs, past the cigar-stand of Hamagawa and into Jap Alley. He had almost forgotten the chase Osaiki and those other Japanese had given him, and when he thought of it now it was only to give one swift look about him and then dismiss the matter from his mind.

In vain he looked about for the man with the crippled hand. After an hour's search, Ward gave up in despair and turned his steps back toward Camptown.

He found a different Camptown from the one he had left. He encountered some difficulty in discovering the camp of his friends, so many new tents had been pitched in his absence.

"Whe-ew! Camptown's growing like a mushroom mining-town," he told himself.

It was true. Camptown had tripled its population during the preceding day and night. Thousands, displaced by the Japanese, were flocking into town to haunt the packing-houses, looking for work.

Carmichael was the first to meet Ward.

"The latest news!" he announced. "The Japs are going to take the places of the men and women in the packing-houses to-morrow!"

CHAPTER IX

A BOWL OF NOODLES

"HEY, kid, where you drillin' so late at night?"

Ward halted and peered doubtfully at the figure lounging in the shadow of an electric-light pole. It was nearly a week after he had lost the yellow paper.

"Don't reco'nize an old pal, eh? Don't ye mind the hop-head that worked ye fer two bits down Chiney Alley one time?—saw ye at Fong Kee's. Course ye do. Shake."

"Yes, I do," replied Ward, extending a short, square hand. "I've been looking for you this long time."

"Lookin' fer *me?* What for, kid? Want that two bits back?"

"Oh, no, it wasn't that," Ward hastened to say. "It was—can you read Japanese?"

"Sure muttons," replied the hop-head. "I've savvied the lingo pretty nigh ever since I quit the cradle. Was a Chink court-interpreter in this burg fer eight years, y'know—time I was in with the political push. What you got?"

"Nothing now. I'd forgotten that I didn't have it any more. It was only a paper. Didn't mean anything, I guess. Oh, yes, I knew your voice right away. You—er—look better."

"That's gospel. I was on me uppers them days and no mistake," apologized the fellow. "I never was so all in, down and out, as then. A fly-cop pinched me that very night, and I never got out o' the jug until yesterday."

"Gee! That was a whole month ago," calculated Ward, wondering at the man's rejuvenated complexion and well-filled cheeks.

"Yep, and I'd 'a' held 'er down fer two more, but me Moll loosened up and squared me fine. She took me back on the band-wagon again and I'm on velvet once more. Crackey, but I near croaked fer the want of a pill in there! But it straightened me up, kid, and I ain't so tough a looker as I was. Handsome Jack o' the West Side—that's what they used to call me. Time was when I was king o' the white sports o' Chinatown. But talkin' about feed—come along and have some Chiney noodles. Never downed a bowl o' noodles? You're missin' half yer life, kid. Come along."

"All right, I'm with you," agreed Ward readily.

They crossed Tulare Street and, turning north into Chinese Alley, climbed a narrow and rickety stairway to the second floor.

"This here's the warmest noodle-joint in the burg," assured the hop-head.

Past a corpulent Chinaman, sitting mummy-like behind a little money-counter, the man led the way through a pair of strung-bead portières into a large room set with tables of polished black wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl in Oriental patterns.

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Ward's companion motioned him to a seat at a little square table standing against one wall and, taking a stool himself, he called out "Two noodles" at a Chinese waiter who came bustling along with a steaming pot, a pair of tiny teacups and two forks.

"Here's how!" hailed the hop-head, pouring out the hot amber liquid.

"Gee, it's good!" admitted Ward, sipping slowly.

"Lots o' business to-night," remarked Handsome Jack, glancing around at the customers seated at the other tables. "Midnight—that's the time o' day these heathens gather in the mazuma. They don't figger on gettin' their rent paid much afore eleven o'clock. Society swells drop around anywhere up to midnight. After twelve the place gets free and easy. About two she begins to become disreputable, and by half-past three or four ye most generally find the heathens howlin' for the cops to chase the mob out. Hokey! That Chink's a long time chew-chewin' along here with them two bowls! Ah, here he waddles!"

The waiter set down two large steaming bowls, piled high with a convoluted mass of doughy white cords.

"Yum! Yum!" gloated Ward's companion. "Looks like long-legged spaghetti ironed out—eh, kid? Go to it. You'll need yer fork, but it's chop-sticks or nothin' fer yer uncle."

With a grunt of satisfaction the man seized a pair of chop-sticks from a wooden holder in the center of the table and, bending low, lifted the summit of his pile and jammed as much as he could of the doughy tangle into his mouth. The mass of strings failed to detach themselves from the heap in the bowl. Nothing daunted, the noodle-devotee did not let go, but worked his jaws rapidly, at the same time whipping his head from side to side. Finally the last thread snapped and he straightened up in triumph and gulped down the captured mouthful.

"Great! Great!" he declared, with exceeding gusto. "Hey, kid, why ain't you eatin'? Thought I seen you pick up yer fork a minute ago."

"Oh, I don't feel hungry," protested Ward, dropping his eyes.

"Ha! Ha! I'm wise to ye," laughed the hop-head. "You're seasick. It gives you cold feet to watch a ginnie stickin' the noodles into his face. Don't you deny it, now."

"I admit they don't look good to me," confessed Ward.

"They ain't nothin' like 'em, kid. Take my tip and pitch in. They ain't no other way of eatin' 'em. All the table-manners in the world 'ud never teach you to down noodles any gracefuller than Yours Truly. Rubber at some o' the stiffs around you. Rest yer lamps on that old Chink over there. He never even busts 'em in two, but just takes one end in his mug and gobbles away, happy-like, until the tail comes. Then he quits 'cause there ain't no more to put down. Come on, kid, fall to."

"No, I don't believe I care for any," maintained the youth. "I'll drink some more o' this tea, though."

"If you ever try 'em once you'll be a noodle-fiend the rest o' yer natural—sure," predicted the hop-head, between mouthfuls. "It's a habit that gets you just like hittin' the pipe or drinkin' Chiney gin. You can't quit it. No, the Chinks don't put any dope or anything like that in the kettle, but it's somethin' that grows on you until about the only way you can quit it is to get yerself locked up in the jug.

"Did you get out o' old Fong Kee's all right that night?" asked the hop-head casually, as he cleaned out the last of the noodles and lifted the bowl to his face to sip the soup which remained.

"No," answered Ward, and briefly outlined his experience with the gamblers.

"Holy mackerel!" exclaimed Handsome Jack, when the other was done. "Tried to croak ye, did they? And they called ye a spy! I ain't s'prised, though. I tell ye, kid, I've seen things about this little old dump over here acrost the track that has made me scratch me block a time or two already. Them Japs has got somethin' up their sleeve that they're goin' to spring pretty soon. They wouldn't call ye a spy 'less there was somethin' to be spied on, would they? It wasn't the Chinks that chased ye the hardest; it was the Japs, and whatever they thought ye was spyin' on didn't have nothin' to do with that fantan joint. Betwixt you an' me, I size it up as somethin' military. Nothin' less. Did ye ever take in that Jap theater on F Street? Well, sir, they change the performance every week, but I notice there's one stunt that's always the same. The show always ends with a lot o' Japanese war-pictures being throwed on the screen. They

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show 'em Port Arthur and a lot o' war-ships and things and always wind up with Togo and Oyama and their flag.

"The Japs go plumb bughouse over it, night after night. I tell you, the little skunks are spoilin' fer a scrap. They got a hunch that they can lick the world with one fist tied behind 'em, and every last raisin-picker among 'em imagines he's a second Napoleon Bonaparte. Why, they're gettin' so pig-headed that a cop can't pinch one of 'em without knockin' 'im down with a club. I seen one little rooster not five feet long scrap a couple o' big bluecoats ten minutes before one of 'em finally knocked 'im cold. No, you can't tell me it don't mean nothin', kid. There's somethin' rotten in Japtown—like the poet-guy says."

The hop-head rose from the table, kicked over his stool and started for the door. Ward followed. Beyond the first pair of beaded curtains he hesitated, and his face turned the color of his brick-red hair. Running after his companion he tapped him on the shoulder.

"Guess I won't go down now," he excused himself. "Met a friend. Much obliged for the noodles, though I didn't try 'em. See you again."

WARD turned back and cast his eyes toward a far corner of the dining-room. A small hand was beckoning encouragement, and he advanced, but diffidently, for he remembered the peculiarly hurried departure which he had taken from the home of Toku upon the occasion of his most recent visit there.

The girl, however, seemed for the time being to have forgotten the embarrassing incident.

"Sit down, boy," she commanded, with a genuine welcome in her eyes. "This my friend, Hanna Yonekura. Had noodle? No? I ordah for you. Yes, yes—" shaking a baby-like finger at him— "you no say no. Toku treat; Red-Head eat. What you say, Hanna?"

"I say good," giggled Hanna, a doll-faced girl even smaller, though older, than Toku. "Noodle make good sleep. Every night I eat noodle."

Knowing not how to refuse, Ward sat silent, waiting for the noodles to come and ransacking his brain for a graceful method of dodging the task of devouring them. At last they came and Toku and her companion at once set to work, encouraging Ward to follow their example. There stood the bridge, and the only road in sight lay across it. Ward picked up his fork and stuck it gingerly into the pile of twisted white strings. Then he lifted it gently, shut his eyes and opened his mouth. The bare fork clashed with his front teeth. He opened his eyes and looked surprised.

Hanna Yonekura indulged in a chirrupy little laugh, and Toku smiled sympathetically.

"All run away, eh?" inquired Toku. "You catchy this way," laying down her chop-sticks and using a fork for demonstration purposes. She pushed the fork down into the noodles and, twisting rapidly, slowly lifted it again. Still twisting, she put the ample forkful into her pretty mouth and, quickly snipping the stubborn strings, held the fork triumphantly aloft.

"Now you try, brave boy," she laughed.

Ward tried, and tried again, and tried some more. At last he safely landed a liberal mouthful of food at its proper destination. After that he had less trouble in transferring the elusive but seductive Oriental concoction to his mouth.

"What you think my fellah, Hanna?" inquired Toku, glancing mischievously at Ward.

"Nize fellah," replied the other girl, laughing. "Strong shouldahs. Nize red head."

"Ha! ha!" cried Toku, clapping her hands. "You savvy. I lika red head, too. Where Toku button, fellah?" she challenged, turning to the blushing Ward.

"Here," he indicated, flinging open his coat.

"I saw Osaiki to-night," Toku said, suddenly. "Osaiki want mally me. He big man among Jap-anese. Maybe so I mally him."

She spoke with an air of doubt that suggested sincerity. Not noting the furtive glance she shot at him from the corners of her eyes, Ward was taken in. He brought his fist down on the table.

"Osaiki's no good," he declared vehemently. "He's a gambler. He—he——"

"Ah-h! you jealous!" she accused swiftly, "jus' like Osaiki!"

"I'm not!" he snapped, but realized, as he spoke, that perhaps there was some truth in the accusation.

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"You jealous—jealous," mocked Toku. "I no lika you."

"Al right," growled Ward. "I'll go then."

He started to rise.

"Wait!" Toku's tone suddenly changed. She bent her eyes upon him with a warmth that she had never displayed before. "You no go. Toku lika brave boy. One time Toku gif' brave boy litta present—Toku wan' litta present."

"Sure, I'll give you a present," agreed Ward, mollified. "Just tell me what you want and it's yours."

She leaned across the table toward him.

"Gif' Toku litta paper."

Ward started. "Oh—ah—I would," he floundered, "but I haven't got it."

"Gif' Toku litta paper,' she repeated, leaning so close that he felt her warm breath upon his cheek.

"It's gone. I'm sorry. Anything else——?"

"Please, nize fellah, give Toku litta paper."

"But don't you see that I can't! How can I give it to you when I haven't got it?"

The girl straightened up, with flaring eyes.

"You lie!" she hissed. "You lie!"

Ward recoiled.

"So that's the way you take it! Then I *would* better go."

"Go! go!" she cried.

Then, half turning her back upon him, she lifted her cup of tea and sipped it slowly and deliberately, as if she had entirely forgotten his presence.

Ward hesitated, then, with a flushed face, he stalked toward the door. At the door he hesitated again and looked back. Toku was still toying unconcernedly with her cup. With a shrug Ward passed out and descended the stairs to the street.

"I wonder if she's trying to work me?" he asked himself.

It hurt his vanity a bit at first. Presently he grew more deeply serious.

"I wonder why all the Japs want to get that yellow paper so bad? I wonder what the 'something the Japs have up their sleeves' is? I wonder what!"

CHAPTER X

NIPPON MAKES MERRY

THE Japanese had taken the places of the white laborers in the packing-houses. Their second great cut in wages, when the aliens scaled the price of picking raisins down to one and one-half cents a tray, while resulting in the recapture of the major fraction of the field-jobs, had still left from one to two thousand of their number idle. To assure employment to this small army the Japanese had offered to man the packing-houses for a uniform wage of one dollar a day per laborer.

Not all the growers had found the heart to discharge their white labor forthwith, merely because the yellow men offered to work for less. Also there were packers who did not turn away their American help to try Japanese at one dollar a day and board themselves. But a considerable majority of both hastened to profit by the wage-cutting, and the result was that every Japanese laborer in the valley was soon at work once more.

Despite the prediction of members of the Raisin Workers' Union that untrained Asiatics would never be able to perform the skilled work of the women in the packing-houses, under the tutelage of a few experts and skilled white foremen, they were reported as giving satisfaction from the first. The Japanese were at work, and though receiving but from one-third to one-half of what they had earned a few weeks previously they apparently considered that they had won a victory.

A victory for the Japanese it was, and now, on the crest of it and in the face of the hatred that was rising against them, the Japanese did a very audacious thing. To-day, though the raisin-season was at its height, every packing-establishment employing Japanese was closed, every vineyard in the county employing Japanese suspended work.

Sato, head of one of the Japanese banks, had merely waved a jeweled hand and said, "No work," and millionaire packers as well as growers had nothing to do but to submit. For a whole day the biggest industry in the valley was paralyzed. To the wife of the Mikado had been born a son, and his loyal subjects in far-away America must needs celebrate. Thus a national holiday in Japan became a national holiday in an American city without a single American being so much as consulted in the matter.

All day throngs of Japanese, dressed in their best, trooped about Chinatown and the whole West Side. Money flowed freely in the pool-rooms and gambling-houses. In

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the cafés the little yellow men ate, drank and were merry.

The real celebration, however, began after darkness had fallen. Ward Elder saw it for the first time as a stream of tiny lights pouring into Tulare Street from the south. A far-away band of music struck up a lively quickstep and the lights multiplied and swept forward like a legion of monster fireflies descending upon the city.

On came the lights, bobbing up and down as if on wings, until Ward made out in the moonless night the forms of marching men. A moment later he could see their faces. They were square-jawed, flat-nosed and brown-complexioned. It was a great column of Japanese patriots on parade.

The marchers walked four abreast, keeping perfect step. Each carried a paper lantern at the end of a long wand. At their head rode a little thin-faced Japanese on a white horse. Hoisted on high above the first company of men behind him waved the flag of Japan, a great blood-red sun upon a white field. By its side—as the law compelled—were carried the Stars and Stripes of the United States. Up and down the long column galloped the aides, the thousands of Japanese in line being as thoroughly under control as if they had been an invading army.

The startling pageant was not without its spectators. All Fresno seemed to be on the streets that night. Especially were the working-people out in force. Men, women and children packed the edges of the sidewalks and elbowed energetically to get closer glimpses of the men who had taken their places or those of their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters or husbands in the raisin-industry.

Reaching the plaza in the center of the town, the band stopped playing and waited for the marchers in the rear to close up. The column doubled itself again and again, until the broad square was black from curb to curb throughout its entire length. Then, at a signal from the leader on the white horse, a great shout of "*Banzail Banzail Banzail*" rose to the sky.

It was the great red heart of Asia pulsating in the streets of an American city.

Not a sound in response came from the people crowded on the sidewalks. They were dumb. When the Japanese hurrah had died away there followed several minutes of deathlike stillness. Men and women looked into one another's faces and did not attempt to conceal the fear in their hearts. Then a growl, low but ominous, passed from group to group. It rose higher. But the music broke forth again, the procession stretched itself out in the street once more and headed by a roundabout way back toward Chinatown.

The reception of the Japanese column back in Chinatown was tremendous. Enormous bunches of firecrackers, set off by Chinese merchants vying with one another for the favor of their military conquerors, deafened the voices of fife and drum. On the sidewalks enthusiastic Mongolians echoed the *banzais* shouted from the middle of the street by the yellowy-brown invaders.

A DAINTY white handkerchief waved in his very face and a bird-like voice crying "*Banzail*" suddenly arrested Ward's footsteps. It was Toku.

"What you think Jap-anese now, Mista Red-Head?" she inquired, with a mischievous smile, but with a note of pride. "You think Jap-anese good for some things 'sides hard work—hey?"

Seeing the look of doubt and hesitation on his face, she stepped closer and raised a playful finger.

"You no be mad Toku. Brave boy no lie? Brave boy no have litta paper—no?"

"No." Ward shook his head.

"Toku b'lief. Brave boy no lie. You no be mad?"

"No, I won't be mad," smiled Ward.

The girl was attired in a close-fitting tailor-made street-suit of the latest American style. Her hands were daintily gloved, and topping her wreath of raven hair was a new Fall hat of gay design. Ward had never before seen her in conventional street dress and he realized more than ever her startling beauty. But for the Oriental nose and the curved lids which drooped above her great black eyes, she might have been taken for an unusually attractive and well-proportioned high-school girl of European descent.

"Toku tell Red-Head," she announced, abruptly becoming grave and stepping closer to him.

"What is it?"

"You watch Osaiki."

"Watch Osaiki?"

"Yeh, watch—you savvy? Osaiki jealous you—crazy jealous. He say he do you up."

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"Osaiki says he'll do me up! Well, I guess I can take care of myself."

"No! No! You watch!"

Vehemently she nodded her warning.

"He crazy jealous you. Two times he see you my house—two. Last time he mad; I say I lika you, he crazy. Then friend tell Osaiki you eat noodle Toku. Osaiki much crazy more. Say find Melican man—kill. You watch."

"All right, I'll watch," laughed Ward, yet recalling the wicked glitter in the eyes of the dandy that night when Toku stood between Osaiki and himself, "but I guess he'll not——"

"There Osaiki now!" whispered Toku, pointing. "See—in street. He see us. He mad now—crazy jealous. See!"

Ward looked and, sure enough, there was Osaiki, marching with the column of Japanese, marching, keeping step, but with his eyes bent malevolently on Ward and Toku. Yes, he saw them, and it was evident that he was jealous and very angry.

"Acts as if you might be his personal property," sneered Ward, returning the dandy's stare.

"Yeh," replied Toku; "you watch. I go now. Good-by, Red-Head."

"Good-by," returned Ward, gazing admiringly after her.

With a little nod the girl stepped away from him and was quickly lost in the crowd. Ward shoved his fists deep into his pockets and gave a low whistle. He looked over the multitude in an effort to catch another glimpse of the lean face of the dandy.

"He'll do me up, eh?" he muttered. "I shouldn't wonder if he *did* try to stick a knife in my back—judging from those eyes of his."

The column swung south and turned into a quarter-block surrounded by a high board fence. Mingling with the motley flock at the rear Ward found himself in a large amphitheater open to the sky. At the far end was a commodious stage upon which several dignitaries of the celebration were already taking their places.

The short-bodied marchers crowded close upon the benches and respectfully removed their hats. Ward removed his hat, too, and edged farther and farther forward until the few white and black men who had entered with him were far to the rear and he could see nothing but a paving of tense yellow faces turned expectantly toward the stage.

FOLLOWING a patriotic oration, the stage was quickly cleared and Ward was amazed by a series of gymnastic feats such as he had never dreamed of. His amazement doubled when he noted that the majority of the performers were weather-beaten of face and horny of hand. Most of them, he was sure, were working as laborers in the packing-houses or in the fields. Where had they got their training? How had they developed such lithe and symmetrical bodies, each like a pygmy Hercules?

The gymnasts gave place to a group of jiu-jitsu experts, and they in turn to a group of swordsmen who pranced nimbly about the stage, two at a time, feinting and thrusting, balancing themselves with huge open fans held aloft behind them in their left hands.

Following several real contests for points, a large-sized swordsman, made up in a false beard and jacketed in a Russian flag, stepped out to do battle with a diminutive fellow attired in the colors of the Mikado.

"Russia! Russia!" shouted the thousands of spectators in chorus.

The two swordsmen engaged in a realistic conflict in which now one and now the other held the advantage. When little Japan was getting the better of the affray the vast assemblage tossed their hats and howled in transports of patriotic delight. When for a moment big Russia forced his tiny opponent back, the mob bellowed its hostility, and hundreds, forgetting that it was nothing but a play they were looking upon, started to their feet as if to spring upon the platform and tear the bearded fighter into thousands of pieces.

Amazed by the profound sensation the mock engagement was making upon the little yellow men, Ward glanced about him. The aisles behind were choked with agitated Japanese, not one white face visible among them. Twenty feet to the right was the south fence, ten feet high. It was then that Ward saw, for the first time, seated in a chair upon a platform against the fence, Hamagawa the mysterious cigar-dealer. Beside him stood Osaiki.

Both were gazing complacently at the extravagant demonstration of their countrymen. But even as Ward looked, Osaiki's

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eyes wandered lazily over the crowd and, suddenly stopping, fixed on the red head which loomed large among the many black ones.

The young American fancied that he could discern a gleam of unutterable hatred in the brief stare directed at him.

"I hope he doesn't tackle me with all this mob around," thought Ward. "I wouldn't have half a chance for my life here."

An outburst of applause turned Ward's eyes toward the stage and he saw that little Japan was getting all the better of the battle of the swords. Clash! Clash! he forced his burly adversary back. Then, with a sudden lunge, he ran the big man through—apparently—and put a foot on the victim's neck while he bowed to the cheering multitude. Then he sheathed his sword and started to walk leisurely off the stage.

But what is this? A second large gladiator leaps into the arena. In a flash Ward recognizes in the make-up the caricature of Uncle Sam. Slower of comprehension, the brown spectators stare in deep silence. But as the two champions spring furiously at each other, they understand, and there wells up a roar doubling in volume the noise that attended the fight between Japan and Russia.

As one man the rows of Japanese jumped to their feet, climbed upon benches, waved hats and arms and screamed in hysterical approbation. There was a movement toward the stage. That was all that Ward saw of the sham battle and of the entertainment; for the next instant scores of fingers were pointing in his direction.

Here was a representative of Uncle Sam ready to hand. Here was an embodiment of all that they hated, and the hate of the Asiatic runs deeper than the hate of the son of the Occident. The Japanese were beside themselves; they were in a patriotic fury. The nearest one struck at Ward. He dodged the blow. A second reached for his throat, but he backed away. The Japanese had vacated the bench behind him and he sprang upon it.

"Get back there!" he yelled, shaking a fist in the face of the pursuing mob. "I can lick any one of you, but I won't fight a hundred!"

The crowd, understanding, hesitated, and in that moment one Japanese jumped to the fore and motioned the others back. They obeyed, clearing the benches away and leaving a spot bare on the ground a half dozen paces square.

"Come on, you!" shouted the challenger, stepping to the center of the ring.

Ward leaped down from the bench, but as he did so a second Japanese rushed into the open space and shoved the first one backward.

The challenger gave up his place, and when the mob saw the face of the newcomer it set up a great shout:

"Osaiki! Osaiki! Banzai! Banzai! Osaiki!"

CONTEMPTUOUSLY, his back to Ward, the newcomer tore off his coat, vest, collar and cravat and tossed them to the willing hands of his countrymen, then turned and faced the young American. Yes, it was Osaiki.

Osaiki had come for his revenge. Hate burned in his aristocratic eyes, hate, pride, triumph—the triumph that is sure of victory.

As Ward returned him glare for glare, there swept over him the same hot anger that he had felt when Toku first informed him that Osaiki expected her to marry him.

For a long moment the two glowered at each other, white and yellow within the ring of yellow, then Osaiki started forward on his toes in little jerky leaps.

Ward remembered then that Osaiki was accounted a champion at jiu-jitsu. He recalled Toku's words:

"Osaiki whip you, boy. Osaiki big jiu-jitsu man. Whip everybody. You betta go."

That brought him another wave of anger. Toku imagined Osaiki could whip him! Well, now they would see!

Crouching low, Osaiki circled. They were of equal size, Osaiki's superior height equalizing his less-compact build. It was to be a fight with nature's primordial weapons, but tricks learned through ages of man-cultivation were to be applied to them. It was white brute-science against yellow brute-science and, to the mob of onlookers, was a fitting close to the patriotic orgies of the day.

Though Ward kept his eyes fixed upon those of his antagonist, waiting for his rush, he could not help but see past him to the crowding Asiatics who walled him in on every side. Score upon score of pairs of

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eyeballs flashed white like darting silverfish in the cloudy sea of Oriental faces that surrounded them. The faces did not move; the bodies did not move; nothing moved but those silvery white eyeballs, those darting fish. Ward knew that every spectator was holding his breath for the first coming-together of the fighters.

As Osaiki circled he circled closer. Sneeringly he circled, moving so close that Ward was tempted to dart out his left in the hope of reaching the scornful mouth.

Osaiki even made sport of him. He cut up some antics with feet and hands for the purpose of making the onlookers laugh, and they laughed. Ward boiled within, but still he waited, for he remembered that he was within the enemy's hive and that he was going against a game that was new to him.

Gliding closer, Osaiki shot out his right in the direction of Ward's chin. Ward thought it was a right lead for his jaw and he treated it as such, though it was an attempt to grasp him by the shirt collar. Ward's left elbow went up, fending the hand. At the same instant his right went out and Osaiki staggered half-way back across the ring, pain and amazement twisting his face.

Ward grinned. The spectators let out their pent-up breath with a noise like hissing steam.

Osaiki returned to the attack, not sneering now, but scowling only. Again he circled about Ward, cautiously. He dodged in, made an indeterminate feint with his left, shot out his right and grasped Ward's left wrist in a grip of steel.

The yellow ring squeaked with delight, Osaiki dodged back to avoid the American's fist, but Ward was quicker than he. The fist reached the unprotected chin, not with full force, but with enough of it to stagger the Jap and loose his hold. In a flash the young American was on the offensive, charging this way and that and whipping out rights and lefts one after another. Osaiki turned his back and ran about the ring, Ward running after.

Ward felt a twinge of shame that he should be pursuing a man and trying to punch him in the flat of the back. He would have stopped, but too late. Osaiki had been drawing him on, and now he pulled off his trick. Abruptly he dropped to his hands and knees and presented his body sidewise to his enemy's legs. Too close to stop or even to jump, Ward tripped, sprawling headlong.

So that was the game! In the very air Ward realized his danger. He recalled the twisting of necks and limbs on the stage. He knew that one jiu-jitsu jerk was capable of dislocating a shoulder, breaking an arm or shocking the consciousness from his brain.

So as he fell he rolled, as a football-player rolls. Hands, head, shoulder and over he rolled, turning swiftly and getting to his knees as Osaiki, like a panther, sprang upon him. He struck out as he rose, preventing his enemy from getting a death-hold, yet Osaiki was gripping the clothing at his throat and was throwing him.

Ward turned entirely over, sidewise, but luckily his knees were under him again. Now he was entirely on the defensive, dodging, striking, breaking one hold after another in quick succession, trying to get to his feet and put his fists before him. Once Osaiki had him by his muscular neck, and he thought he was gone. Another time Osaiki was twisting his left arm.

He never understood how he broke that hold, but he did it. At last he was free and on his feet, and Osaiki was once more circling him.

Panting and begrimed, Ward thanked his stars for that escape. He told himself that he must not go down again. He must be wary. The game of the Jap was newer, if anything, than his game was to the Jap, and he could never tell where the lightning might not strike. Within the hour he had seen superbly muscled men tossed and tumbled about the stage by what appeared to him little more than twists of the wrists. Magical twists they must be! And they had been given by one jiu-jitsu expert to another. Could he, then, hope to escape the hold that would conquer?

Ward was wary, but he was not afraid. He pressed after Osaiki, telling himself that the next time they came to close quarters he would finish his enemy. But Osaiki fought at much longer distance than a boxer fights. The Jap was not master of the blocking and ducking tactics which constitute the defense in boxing, but he had the advantage of being able to fight at a distance. While Ward must press close enough to land a doubled fist upon face or body, Osaiki had only to approach near enough so that he could grasp an arm or a wrist.

Osaiki caught Ward's wrist. Like light-

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ning his hand flashed out. Ward saw the flash and drew in his left, but the yellowy-brown fingers closed tightly upon him. Forward Ward lunged with a right, but Osaiki had learned his lesson. To the right he whirled and backward, whirling away but still keeping possession of the wrist. Ward missed, and Osaiki kept on whirling. He whirled and whirled, sending Ward around like a peg-top, trying to whirl him off his feet, bending at the same time on Ward's wrist, endeavoring to dislocate the delicately adjusted bones between his fingers of steel.

Nimble as a circus-tumbler, Ward kept his feet. But he was hard put to it. He was unable to press after his antagonist. All his powers were necessarily concentrated on keeping his feet and endeavoring to break that vise-like hold on his wrist. Excruciating pains were darting through his left hand, wrist and arm, and every moment he expected to hear the cracking sound of a dislocated wrist.

When the whirl began the yellow ring chuckled with anticipation, but now Ward heard a ripple of sharp exclamations and vaguely felt that the Japanese were expressing their astonishment that he was battling so valiantly against Osaiki's hold. Suddenly Osaiki, foiled in his efforts to tip his antagonist off his feet, stopped whirling and threw his weight into a tremendous jerk.

If Ward's shoulder had been less toughly tendoned that wrench might have twisted it out of its socket. But it held, and Osaiki, having concentrated all his energies in his great effort, left himself open to assault. A vicious right swing tore his left ear, a right jab closed his left eye, and he was compelled to break his hold and give ground.

The ring of spectators were silent. Ward could hear the Asiatics breathing in short, excited gasps. Vaguely he wondered what those Japs were thinking. So far, he felt that he was ahead in the battle. He told himself that if the fight could be decided on points right now, it would be his shoulder that the referee would pat in token that he was the victor. But the fight was not to be decided right now.

OSAIKI was breathing heavily. Gone was the insolent leer which had distorted his face in the early rounds. Now there was no expression of passion. Only the tensity of endeavor, of determination, shaped his countenance. There was no lost motion about his movements as he circled Ward.

He danced forward and danced backward, but each time there was purpose in his advance. Twice in succession he executed a quick knuckle-stroke which Ward knew to be an attempt to cripple him momentarily by striking his funny-bone. Twice in succession he attempted to grasp a knee or a foot. The second time Ward uppercut with his left and brought a thin red stream trickling from one of the aristocratic nostrils.

Osaiki was more cautious than ever, inclining to fight at greater and greater distance. Evidently he had had enough of American fists, and hoped to execute a trick at long range that would put his enemy in his power. The situation caused the American youth to press forward more and more. He became angry and angrier.

"What's the matter with you? Afraid of me? Why don't you quit running away and fight?" he shouted, rendered desperate by Osaiki's retreating tactics.

The onlookers heard and understood, and they urged their champion on. Osaiki aimed a vicious kick at Ward's right instep. He missed and kicked a second time, striking the youth's foot with a glancing blow. Ward felt a paralyzing pain shoot through his foot and up his leg. The foot refused to support its part of his weight, and he went to hopping about on one leg, his face distorted with pain and anger. At this the Japanese set up a shout and Osaiki rushed closer, casting about for a finishing hold.

But the American, feigning more strength than he had, crippled of foot as he was, whipped out rights and lefts, reaching Osaiki with blows ineffective but of sufficient steam to hold the Jap back. As he fought, he raged within. Why couldn't the scoundrel fight fair? Using his feet! Kicking! It was cowardly!

Osaiki succeeded in getting inside of Ward's guard. Butting his head against the American's chest, he put one hand at his collar and heaved hard in an effort to throw him off his feet. Ward felt himself going, but just in time he worked his arms free and beat a rapid tattoo on the Jap's two ears. Osaiki broke away, but slipped back again, gripping Ward's clothing at the shoulder and stiffening his arm, holding Ward away and whirling to avoid his pursuing fists.

Round and round they went, round and

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round, whirling, jerking, dodging, Osaiki always trying to trip the American off his feet, Ward always trying to reach the face of the Japanese with his fists.

Compelled to break away still another time, Osaiki became desperate. His tricks had all failed. The white youth was on his feet. His own countrymen, from crying encouragement, were now daring to deride him mildly. In an animal rage he threw caution to the winds, threw Japanese science to the winds, rushed snarling in, rushed against Ward's left, shoved straight forward like a crow-bar.

Osaiki went down. In an instant he had regained his feet and, with a panther snarl, was rushing in again. Again the crowbar left stopped him, but this time he did not go down. He staggered back, regained his balance and ducked. Ward was upon him.

Vainly Osaiki tried to grapple. Vainly he sought refuge from the rain of descending blows. When he crouched, Ward uppercut; and when he straightened up, the American reached through his thrashing arms with rights and lefts. He staggered and dropped his hands. Ward advanced a step, shot across his right to the point of the chin and Osaiki dropped as if struck with an ax.

He rolled over on his back, his battered face to the sky, his thin lips writhing. For a moment Ward stood over him, looking down, alertly waiting, then turned in triumph to the Japanese.

Young America had defeated Little Japan, in a fair fight and no play about it!

BUT the fall of their countryman only excited the ring of spectators the more. Like a pack of hungry wolves they swarmed about the victor, shouting, gesticulating, one after another fiercely demanding the privilege of taking the place of the beaten Osaiki.

"Sure, I'll fight you; I'll fight the whole bunch of you," Ward defied them, tired though he was. "But one at a time. Bring along your next best man. Pick him out yourselves. I don't want to fight a dub."

But suddenly the turmoil was stilled, the pack of brown wolves fell back, silent and respectful. In wonder Ward glanced about him. The massive, mysterious Hamagawa was shouldering his way through the mob.

Hamagawa! The scene in Fong Kee's flashed before Ward's memory. Would Hamagawa recognize him? If so, what would he do to him?

Now Hamagawa was within the circle staring at Ward, appraising him. Surely he would remember that red head!

But if Hamagawa recognized Ward, he made no sign. If he realized that the young fighter now in his power was the person who had snatched away one of his private papers, he must have decided that it would serve no purpose now either to kill him or to search his pockets. He merely motioned imperiously to the rear and spoke the one word: "Go!"

Ward turned and saw a lane opening like magic before him toward the street. Osaiki was still upon the ground and, as his enemy turned his back on the circle, Osaiki raised on an elbow and hurled after him a sinister threat:

"I'll get you; I'll get you yet!"

Ward did not reply. But, walking stiffly from his bruises, yet with head tilted like a victorious gladiator, he reached the street.

When Japtown was far behind he glanced over his shoulder and saw a great red skyrocket carry a signal of fire into the heavens. It was followed by another and another. He listened and, like the far distant chorus of congregated wolves, came the cheering of Japanese patriots, celebrating the birth of their new emperor to be.

CHAPTER XI

FIRST BLOOD

"DID you notice," inquired Crowe, as he and his two camp-mates sat about their open-air breakfast-table the following morning, "how perfect a parade the Japs had?"

"I sure did," replied Carmichael. "I followed along the whole route, and I didn't notice a man lose step—not one. And how perfectly they made the corners! You'd think they were half a dozen regiments of trained soldiers."

"They are," said Crowe.

"Trained soldiers!" Ward literally jumped. "What do you mean? A lot of them are trained athletes; I saw that last night but—trained soldiers?"

"Just that. Trained soldiers," nodded Crowe.

"But those Jap raisin-pickers aren't soldiers!"

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"Most of them are. They were trained in war as well as in gymnastics in the public schools of Japan. Afterward they were trained in the regular army. Nine-tenths of the Jap laborers in our fields are army-reserves of Japan. Half of them, I'd venture to say, fought the Russians."

"Yes, and their Government keeps tab on every last one of them; keeps his name and address," added Carmichael. "There's no secret about that. It's even believed by plenty of people out of the insane-asylums that the officers of these Japs are here with them, ready for any emergency."

"That's news to me," ejaculated the young Easterner. "Then we have a foreign army right here among us!"

"Right," nodded Crowe, "and an army which numbers more men than the entire army of the United States both here and in the Philippines!"

"But isn't that pretty dangerous?"

"I think it is. Some others don't. You see, we have a superstition prevalent in the United States that Japan can't go to war because she's heavily in debt."

And then Crowe went on to explode this and other arguments that had been put forth from some quarters to show that Japan could not undertake a war against the United States even if she wished to do so.

THE Raisin-Workers' Union was organized, and at once became the center of a fierce agitation against the Japanese. The movement, once launched, was given strong support by other and more influential elements of Fresno society. Five thousand white laborers and their families were out of work, idle and on the verge of starvation. More than five thousand Japanese were at work and prosperous, hoarding their money or spending it almost exclusively with merchants and tradesmen of their own race. Thus the business-classes were easily persuaded to join in the demand that the yellow invaders betake themselves to other fields.

From the first the presidency of the union was urged upon Crowe. He declined the place, declaring frankly that the possibilities of accomplishing anything were slight. Prevailed upon to accept, he threw his entire energies into the work of extending the organization, educating the workers as to the perils of Asiatic immigration and turning the public sentiment against the Japanese into what he considered good uses—from the point of view of the raisin-workers.

Ward Elder, at first impatient of such mild means of fighting the Japanese as are afforded by a labor-union, became active in the union-work simply because his idol, Crowe, did so. Ward attended meetings with Crowe, meetings in halls and around camp-fires. He was beside Crowe during his personal talks with those who were doubtful of the wisdom of the fight and, listening to Crowe, he began to glimpse for the first time the breadth and depth of the Asiatic question.

Sentiment soon crystallized into action. Pitched battles occurred on the vineyards and upon the highways. The crisis was reached when one of these battles ended fatally. The bulk of Fresno's population learned the story first from the *Morning Republic.*

According to that publication, at a ranch twelve miles east of the city a dozen families of former Texans, nomadic laborers, after submitting to two reductions in picking-prices, had been evicted to give place to a company of Japanese. The Japanese had arrived while the whites were still on the ranch, and it was asserted had jeered at them. One of the whites had fired a shotgun at his tormentors, who had unexpectedly produced automatic pistols and had gone to shooting in return.

Three of the Americans and one Jap had fallen, while more on both sides were wounded. A sheriff's posse had gone to the scene, and the coroner was expected to arrive in town with the bodies of the dead some time during the morning.

The news of the fatal battle agitated Fresno as that city had never before been agitated in her history. By common consent, business was suspended for the day. Only the banks, the public offices and such institutions as were required by law to operate were opened at their regular hours. Men of all classes, to the number of thousands, gathered in groups on the down-town street-curbings discussing the situation, or passed from group to group seeking the latest news, or made the rounds of the newspaper offices, the office of the sheriff and the morgue.

As the morning wore away the crowd concentrated more and more about the entrance to the morgue, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the coroner's party and the dead.

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At last a great shout went up that they were coming. The mob started on a stampede toward the south, but the coroner, seeing what awaited him, sent his wagon flying around the block, and the bodies were hurriedly unloaded in an alley at the rear.

The people concentrated again before the doors of the building, expecting, as in ordinary cases, that they would promptly be admitted to view the dead. After they had waited a half-hour in vain they went to shouting loudly, demanding admittance, and then to pounding upon the doors and windows. A pane was broken, then another and another. Only then did the coroner appear and beg the people to go away, telling them that the authorities had decided not to expose the bodies to view.

The authorities feared the effect of the sight upon the passions of the people, but the passions of the people were already a-simmer. The mob were insistent. They heaved themselves in a great mass against one of the doors, smashing it in. The coroner was compelled to yield and, giving way gracefully, he led the eager citizens through a long narrow corridor to the rear. To the foremost men he pointed out the exit, a second long and narrow corridor which led to the other of the two front doors.

Struggling in the thick of the mob, Ward Elder noted the stony hardness that set the jaws of the men that streamed out of that second door. It made him fight the more feverishly to get in, and presently he was inside and following the jostling line to the back of the building. As he entered the dingy room he pulled off his hat, like the others. Men in front of him were bowing their heads in awe as they came into the presence of the dead, yet he could hear muttered curses all along the line.

"Why, one of 'em's only a kid—the yellow skunks!" he heard a voice say and, craning his neck, he came in sight of the three bodies of the dead Americans. Yes, one of them had been a mere boy, not over fifteen. Another face was that of a young man in his prime, a heavily tanned face carrying a week's growth of coarse sandy hair and a square jaw, set on a thick muscular neck. The third was a white-haired old man, shriveled and shrunken, with calloused, bony hands. The face was lean and drawn, the face of a man who had toiled all his life and had got nothing for it. As Ward looked upon the three lifeless forms, now one and now another, awe gave place to a blind fury akin to the fury of the men about him. He turned his eyes away and shoved desperately against the man ahead of him in a mad scramble to get out. Shoved by the line from behind, he could not have tarried had he wished. He passed out of sight of the dead, through the corridor and the door at its far end, and emerged into the freer atmosphere of the street.

AS RAPIDLY as the morgue-exit emptied its stream of men into the mob, just so rapidly was the total of angry faces in that mob augmented. The blood of white men had been shed by Asia, and it was inevitable that the blood of Asia should be demanded in expiation.

The angry men streaming from the exit joined those in the street, and a hoarse battle of talk was the first result of the fusion of wrath of the two. Here and there an impassioned talker raised his voice so that as many as possible of his neighbors might hear, and forthwith all within sound of his voice rushed toward him in order to understand the better and to see his face. Thus the sea of bodies was in constant agitation.

"Not one o' the yellow dogs has been arrested," Ward heard one man shout, "and take my word for it they never will be. Nobody'll ever be punished for this piece of business."

"They've got to be punished!" cried another. "If the police don't punish 'em, it's up to us."

"They ought to be lynched!" shouted a third.

"Yes, they ought to be lynched!" screamed many voices in chorus.

"We don't know which o' the varmints did it," cried another, "but they all ought to suffer. They're all guilty. I'm for runnin' 'em all out—every last one of 'em."

"Sure, they ought to be run out, and now's the time to do it!" yelled another. "The country ain't safe with 'em here. They might be marching on the residence-district of this town right now, for all we know."

"They ain't got no business in this country, anyhow, the heathens!" shrieked still another; "—taking the jobs of decent Christian people. If our Government ain't got sand enough to chase 'em back home, I guess we have!"

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A squad of policeman appeared at one end of the mass of people and began urging them to move on. But this attempt to break up the mob was too feeble in comparison with the passions of the hour, and the men in blue clothes soon gave up and stood idly by, sympathetic spectators of the gathering wrath of the multitude. Suddenly a balcony-window just above the morgue was burst open, and an old man with long white hair and beard stood forth in plain view, spreading his arms wide apart as a signal for silence.

"Are we Americans or are we dogs?" screamed the old man, in a shrill, cracked voice, when the crowd lent him ear. "Are we Americans going to get out and let these foreign cheap-skate heathens own the country, or are we going to stay and run them out? They ain't room for both of us; you all know that. Which will it be? They took our jobs and starved us, and now they're shooting us down like wild beasts. I say run 'em out of the country and do it now. I'll lead the way myself. Remember those countrymen of ours lying dead and cold below. Fathers of families like you and me, that's what they are; hard-working, honest men murdered in cold blood. If you're men you'll hear the cries of their widows and orphans and revenge them. Next time it will be you or me, or our wives and children. Whoever likes these yellow devils better'n he does his own people let him stay behind. Everybody else come on with me!"

A roar of approval greeted the words of the patriarch. It seemed now that the mob was past caring for words, that now it was ready for action. But from somewhere in the crowd rose a shout:

"Crowe! Crowe! Let's hear what Crowe has to say! Where's Crowe? Here he is—here!"

Half resisting, Crowe was hustled up the stairs and out upon the low balcony. Deliberately he looked over the agitated mass below, many of whom were impatiently counseling the others to move on. He spoke slowly, transforming his husky voice into a clear metallic ring of words which reached the outermost edges of the mob.

"I fear that what I say to you to-day will have no weight, for you have already determined what you are going to do. I know that your anger is just and righteous. I know that you have suffered and are entitled to redress. And yet I can not believe that what you are going to do to-day is wise. Blood will flow, your own blood, some of it. If the spilling of some precious blood to-day would settle this question, then I would say go ahead. But it won't. It will only aggravate the difficulty. If ever there was a time for cool heads, now is the time. You are angry. Wait till you are calm. Wait——"

Crowe broke off suddenly and fell to coughing. He coughed more and more violently, and presently he put his handkerchief to his mouth to wipe away a thin stream of blood that flowed from between his lips.

But nobody saw him. Already the mob had begun to move.

CHAPTER XII

THE RACE RIOT

"TO THE packing-houses! To the packing-houses!" the cry went up, and with the compactness of a scudding flock of sheep the mob surged west.

As far as Ward's scant stature permitted him to see, the street was black with people. A majority of the men were angry. Curses filled the air on every hand. Some, however, started with the mob merely for the excitement of seeing what would happen. As the mass moved it buzzed like swarming bees.

"We'll run 'em out of the packing-houses first," shouted one burly fellow, "then we'll clean out Japtown."

Clean out Japtown! Toku was in Japtown! What was this mob leading him to?

Ward's sudden panic would have brought him to a standstill, but the men behind him shoved forward. Moving with the mob, his mind worked swiftly. His first impulse was to break away, to run to Japtown, to seek out Toku, to warn her to flee and to save herself. He would offer her his protection. He would fight for her. He would see that she was not harmed, though all others of her race might be driven from the land.

But he remembered her derision of American prowess, her confidence in the power of the Japanese to protect themselves, and he knew that she would only laugh at him and refuse to go.

Too, she might inform her father, so that

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her father and all the Japanese would be prepared for the onslaught of the Americans. No, that would never do. It would be treason to his own people; it might mean the death of many of them. No, he would stay with the mob. He would fight the Japanese with the rest. He would stay with the mob until they reached Japtown. Then, if the mob really carried its intentions that far, he would see to it that he reached Toku first, that she would have his protection, that not a hair of her head should be injured. Yes, he would go with the mob.

"We'll clean out Japtown," he heard a man say. "Afterward we'll 'tend to those on the vineyards."

"We'll have the last one of 'em out o' Fresno County inside o' twenty-four hours," cried another.

"What's the matter with givin' 'em warning first?" suggested a little man near Ward; "givin' 'em time to get their duds together and go? They might fight if we press 'em too hard."

"Warning!" sneered a neighbor. "They've had warning enough. Now let 'em take the consequences."

"Fight! Ha-ha!" cackled another. "That's what we want. There's nothing I'd like better than to tangle up with a couple o' Japs!"

Like a rolling snowball, the throng gathered volume as it moved through the business streets toward the railroad-reservation and the string of packing-houses upon it. Teamsters tied up their reins and left their wagons to jump into the forefront of the moving mass. Conductors and motormen deserted their cars, establishing a blockade of the streets. Cooks and waiters hurried out of the restaurants, some of them hatless and still wearing their aprons. Professional men, looking down from their windows upon the mob, were unable to resist the temptation to join it. Nearly all the business-houses along the route were closed and a vast number of their proprietors and employees had already gone to swell the swarm of wrathful Americans. Representatives of every walk of life except the very rich were there, yet the vast majority were wage-workers. Members of the Raisin-Workers' Union and of the various labor-organizations of Fresno formed the leading spirits of the mob.

More and more tumultuous became the mob as it moved onward. Ward, close to the front, heard a sudden cry of "There they go!" and at the same moment caught sight of a group of subjects of the Mikado emerging from a Nipponese restaurant just ahead.

"Catch 'em! Kill 'em!" velled those in the lead, leaping forward in pursuit. The fugitives dashed into an alley and the leaders plunged in behind them.

But when Ward reached the alley the Japs were out of sight and those ahead had turned back. He heard the crash of breaking glass and the sound of splintering wood and knew that the mob was wreaking its vengeance upon the inanimate window-panes and furniture of the men whom it had failed to catch.

On swept the multitude, and it found other Japanese places of business—established on the East Side to catch the trade of the whites—in its path. Stores, restaurants, fruit-stands, barber-shops and shoe-repairing shops were demolished in short order, one after another. In nearly every case, proprietors and employees of the places had been warned in time and had fled. One restaurant-crew was late in leaving and was given a hot chase, the crowd bombarding the little yellow men with onions, eggs and other supplies taken from another eating-house farther down the line.

AT LAST American hands were actually laid upon the person of a son of Nippon. He was a pale little dentist whom a half-dozen raisin-workers, spying his sign, dragged down from his office on the second floor into the street. Hoots and yells greeted his appearance. He was pulled and jostled about, fists were put into his face and he was roundly kicked.

When Ward caught sight of the man his clothes were badly torn, his gold-rimmed glasses hung broken from one ear, he was white and panting, his face was bruised and there was a bloody cut over one eye. A bully twice his size had him by the throat with one hand, while the other hand was doubled into a big fist which was held threateningly near the dentist's face.

"You *will* come to this country, will you?" the bully was snarling. "You *will* take the bread out o' the mouths o' decent Americans, you cheap-skate? Well, we'll show you!"

"Aw, come off," cried Ward, rashly

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jumping in and seizing the white man's coat-sleeve. "This poor devil's had enough."

The bully turned on him fiercely.

"He has, has he? I guess you want some of it, too."

"I believe in chasing those fellows out," went on Ward, "but I wouldn't stand for cruelty."

"You wouldn't, eh? Why, you brat, I'd break you in two. Do you want some of it?"

"Sure, I'll fight you, if that's what you mean," replied Ward, beginning to take off his coat.

But the crowd interposed, the two were swept apart and the battered dentist was permitted to slip away.

Yet the incident had whetted the blood-lust of the mob, and the Jap was no sooner gone than Ward heard his neighbors wishing that they had not been so easy upon him.

"We ought to 'a' killed that measly Jap. We ought to 'a' made an example of him right there," Ward heard one of them growl.

As the mob swarmed into the railroad-reservation and moved toward the nearest packing-houses, a grimmer atmosphere settled upon it. Men who carried pistols pulled their weapons from their pockets, while others who were unarmed seized rocks, coupling-pins and missiles of various sorts from along the tracks. As the first packing-house was neared a great snarl, like that of a jungle-beast crouching for the kill, went up to the sky, and the mob broke from its double-quick gait into a headlong run.

Up on the receiving-platform, yelling hysterically, the front rank swarmed. They tore open the great doors and crowded in, pistols cocked and missiles upraised.

Then from those in the lead a loud shout was heard, half of triumph, half of disappointment. The big work-room was empty!

"The whole bunch has got away to Japtown," shouted some one. "They seen us coming."

"Come on. Let's make sure o' the other packing-houses," cried another. "Then we'll go across and clean out Japtown."

With a ratifying roar the mob swarmed off the platform and moved toward Martin's, a small packing-house, but next in line. As they started, Ward, who was keeping well to the front, saw the fifty-odd Japanese hands flock out of the place and dash down the tracks toward the packing-house beyond.

Hotly the mob pursued.

"Catch the cheap-skates!"

"Run 'em out of town!"

"Kill the scabs!"

"Hi, you *will* take our women's jobs, you dirty foreigners!"

"Never let 'em stop running!"

"Keep 'em going till they get to Japan!"

"Treat 'em like they did those poor devils back there at the morgue!"

One of the hindmost fugitives stumbled and went down in the dust. He rolled over and, without attempting to rise, whipped out a revolver and began firing. Instantly a volley of shots replied from the front rank. Ward saw the pistol drop from the upraised hand, saw the crouching body quiver for an instant, then pitch face forward into the road.

On thundered the mob, over and past the body of the dead Japanese. Some of the fugitive Japs had already carried their warning to Sarkelian's, the next packing-house in line, and now Ward could see the hated aliens filing out of the doors of the biggest establishment of its kind in the valley.

BUT to the astonishment of the advancing Americans the enemy seemed in no great hurry. Deliberately and in good order they filed off the platform. Reaching the ground, they did not turn and flee, but formed in a solid square facing the onrushing Americans. With those who had joined their ranks from the packing-house below there must have been two hundred Japanese in this solid square. The Americans outnumbered them ten to one, yet in the face of the surprising maneuver of the little yellow men, their appalling coolness and self-possession, those in the lead of the mob hesitated. Those coming behind urged them vigorously on, but as each man caught sight of the spectacle ahead he was chilled into momentary inaction.

Serene, immovable, like a regiment of soldiers on review, stood the phalanx of Japanese workmen. They displayed not a weapon, but stood, their arms folded across their chests, the whites of their eyes gleaming, their jaws set like granite—calmly waiting. Their supreme composure, their obvious confidence in some hidden power, some superior protection, held the American mob in check for a quarter of a minute. For that space of time the two groups—

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Asia and America, like antagonists on the point of coming together for a death-struggle—stood silently glaring at each other.

"They're armed!" shrieked a man close to Ward. "The pockets of every last one of 'em's bulging with guns, or they wouldn't be standing like that."

"We'll find out!" shouted a young giant—one who had spat upon the face of the dead Japanese at the morgue. "Here goes for the first shot!"

He cocked his revolver and pointed it deliberately at the mass of Japanese. Not one of them but could see the act as easily as Ward could see it, yet not one of them unfolded his arms. What would happen when that gun was fired?

Ward steeled his nerves for a flash and a report. He held his breath, he gripped his fists; it seemed that the gun would never go off. What was the matter? Did the trigger fail to respond to the pressure? Or had the young giant changed his mind?

Bang! The explosion assailed his ears at last. Instinctively he recoiled, then looked quickly toward the ranks of the Japanese. They were still no longer. A row of leveled pistols were pointed at him. He heard a voice barking Japanese words in a high key, then there was a row of tiny puffs of smoke and a noise as of dry branches crackling at an evening's camp-fire.

The young giant who had fired the pistol threw up his arms with a hoarse cough and crumpled up on the ground. Another fell almost against Ward, fell face upward and, looking down upon him, the youth saw an ooze of soft brains and red blood upon his broken temple. All around him men were cursing horribly and crying out that they were shot. Some of them were emptying their revolvers as fast as they could pull the triggers. Others were fleeing. The multitude surged backward. After all, it was only a mob, and mobs are courageous only when pitted against a vastly inferior force.

On the other hand, the phalanx of Asiatics across that bullet-swept space of forty paces were strong in the knowledge of their perfect organization and interdependence. They continued to fire regularly, the bullets singing a death-song as they came, and many of them finding their mark of human flesh with sickening spats.

When Ward Elder saw his countrymen falling about him, saw the writhing of wounded bodies, the spurt of blood and the glazing of human eyes, he was seized with a red rage like the one that had stirred him as he looked upon the still bodies at the morgue. He owned no weapon, but he seized a pistol which had fallen from a nerveless hand and aimed it at the ranks of the Japanese.

But the hammer snapped on dead cartridges. He threw the pistol away and snatched up another. Its chambers had not been exhausted, and he quickly emptied it at the hated heathens. He picked up a third from the ground and fired the remaining shots that it contained. Presently he found himself running here and there among the fallen, frantically looking for more firearms which he might turn upon the enemy.

It was with a sensation of fierce triumph that he saw the phalanx of Japanese suddenly turn and start away in orderly retreat. The revolver in his hand was empty, but with an angry cry he started to follow. As he did so he was seized roughly from behind and jerked back. The man who was pulling at his arm was Carmichael.

"Are you crazy, boy?" cried his friend. "Do you want to commit suicide? Let's get out of this—quick!"

Only then did Ward realize that he was facing the enemy alone. Except for those who lay upon the ground, the remainder of the mob was in full flight. He was alone with Carmichael. He had fought the Japs until they had retreated. He was the last man to turn his back upon the battlefield.

SLOWLY Carmichael led Ward back toward the center of the city, following in the wake of the routed Americans. Now that the engagement was over, now that the intoxication of the fight was past, a reaction seized Ward and his limbs trembled with weakness. Twice on the way Carmichael was compelled to let him sit down and rest, and the first time his friend partially stripped him to make sure that he had received no wounds. As in a dream he walked, staring emotionless at ambulances, automobiles and express-wagons which tore past him toward the scene of the conflict, on their way to care for the dead and dying.

When at last they reached the heart of the city they found it in an uproar. The people who had gone against the Japanese with sticks and stones and had escaped with

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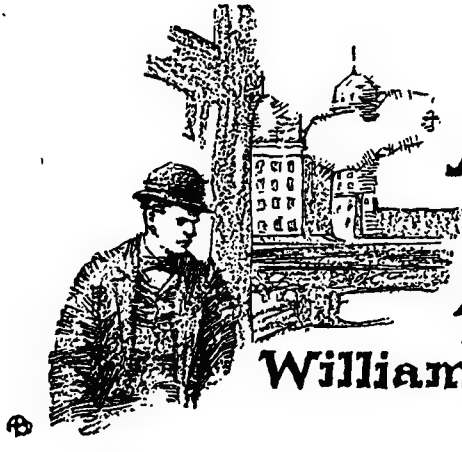
their lives were now preparing feverishly to go against them with guns. The supply of rifles, shotguns and pistols in every hardware and sporting-goods store in Fresno had already been depleted. Men were forming rifle-companies to march upon Japtown.

On the other hand, the city and county authorities, having awakened at last, were making all possible efforts to prevent another collision. The mayor had issued a proclamation to the citizens begging them to keep within their homes for the next twenty-four hours. The sheriff and chief of police were swearing in scores of special deputies to aid their regular forces to preserve order. An appeal to the Governor of the State had already brought a response calling out the local militia and ordering the State-troops from other sections to the scene. The Japanese were flocking by hundreds from outlying districts to Japtown, and the public powers were striving desperately to give them protection.

Japtown, through a deputation of its business-men who had come to the mayor with diplomatic words to assure him of their desire for peace, had been given official permission to surround itself with armed sentries to repel by the power of the bullet any aggressive movement that might force its way past the constituted police authority.

All the energies of the authorities, municipal, county and State, were bent toward protecting the Japanese, toward preventing an invasion of Japtown by Americans. No provision whatever was made toward protecting the Americans against the Japanese. There was no hint or suspicion that Fresno might in a few hours be in need of defense against invasion by the little yellow fighters of Asia.

TO BE CONCLUDED



A Pair of Queens

by

William Patterson White

AFTER I quit the L Up-an'-Down, me an' Paddy Black lined out for Idaho to make our everlastin' fortunes in mines. We prospected a heap, three years in all, an' I got discouraged; but Paddy, he's a hopeful cuss, an' we kept on minin'. We struck it, final, near Squaw Creek in Kootenai County. We scraped enough gold out of the ground for a smelter, an' now we're smeltin' our own ore an' other folks' rock too. It's two years ago when we struck it. Now we're makin' about fifteen thousand a year apiece, an' plenty ore in sight.

You know how it is. I got the notion I wanted to see what a real woman looked like. I told my trouble to Paddy Black.

"You go to Noo York," says Paddy. "That's the place! There's more varieties of real women in Noo York than there are cows in Texas."

That was sure a broad statement, but Paddy swore it was troo. I urged Paddy to trail along with me, but he says "no" most emphatic. There's a reason. Paddy says how in his youth—he's twenty-six now—he lived in Noo York, an' nothin' must do him but go and fall in love with two girls at once.

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He wound up the watch, final, by gettin' engaged to the pair. A mutual friend sprung the joke, an' crack! went the mainspring. A dozen dads, uncles, an' brothers took after Paddy, an' he pulled his freight some sudden. He never did go back, an' when I suggested returnin' East he frothed at the mouth.

"West of the Bitter Roots suits me," says Paddy Black, "an' I can't see Noo York with a telescope."

So I come alone, an' I admit Noo York struck me as a pleasin' place. First off I bought raiment. Five suits, an' I told that tailor to go the limit—money no object. He done that, an' folks could hear me comin'. Them was sure *clo'es!*

I cinched on a suit an' waded in to see the town. Now, when Paddy said good-by to me, he told me special to look at all the women I could see but not to talk to any of 'em or I'd be sorry. I thought said instructions was unnecessary a lot, 'cause I ain't the one to speak to a lady, an' us not introdooced. But one day I was eatin' in a restauraw, an' a couple of real ladies, yellow-haired and red-cheeked, throwed smiles my way. I just couldn't resist. In less time than it takes to saddle a hoss we was as sociable as two heifers an' a fence-post. I was the fence-post.

In a week I went broke, an' I telegraphed Paddy to send me five thousand in a hurry. Paddy sent the five an' a telegram. I was a heap struck by that telegram. It says:

Come home. I told you to keep away from the women.

Now how did he know? He sure must 'a' been a mind-reader. Howsomever, I took his advice an' confined my amoosements to theaters an' roof-gardens. Both was divertin'.

ALSO I has my paw curried. Sure, some folks call it manicoorin'. I stacked up agin this manicoorin'-game when I was gettin' a scrape. The barber-sport suggested manicoorin' when he was through with me. Not wantin' to seem ignorant I told him to lead me to it. He took me into a back room where there was eight little tables along the wall. Each table had a girl settin' at it, an' five of 'em had a gent across on the other side. The girls was holdin' the gents' hands an' fiddlin' with 'em.

I says to myself, if that's manicoorin' I'll be a reg'lar customer. The barber-sport set me at a table with a nice little black-headed girl behind the layout. She didn't say nothin' at first, just spread my paws out an' surveys 'em close.

"Yes, ma'am," I says, when she'd been starin' at 'em a half-minute, "I know they're some big, but you can always hire a helper."

She looked me in the eye then, an' showed all her teeth in a laugh. I liked the scenery, an' I asked her to do it again.

"What?" says she.

"Smile," I says.

She fetched another grin at that, an' says not to talk so loud. I glanced round, an' I seen everybody was doin' the Vigilante stretch, so I stared back mighty grim an' hard till they looked the other way. Then I turned round to the little girl, an' she got busy.

She sure worked a miracle on them nails. She scraped 'em, an' she peeled 'em, an' she pruned 'em down till they was round as half a wagon-wheel. She polished 'em with red powder an' a buckskin jigger. She sure used energy, an' when she was through them nails glistened like a darky's front teeth on a dark night.

"I'll see you agin," I says, when I paid the tax.

She's polite enough to hope I would, an' I started out. I was so busy admirin' the shine on my nails I run bang into a gent comin' in. I looked up, an' he grabbed me. I reached under my coat from force of habit, but I didn't more'n touch the butt of the gun, 'cause I seen the gent was Dill Pickle Van Winkle, a little dude cowpunch who used to be in the Circle-S outfit. But he's all man, Dill Pickle is. He pretty nigh broke Yuma Saxon's neck once for tailin' his pony.

Dill Pickle was sure glad to see me, an' I was some joyous too. He forgot all about havin' his nails curried when he seen me, an' he drug me off to a café. Dill says how he was livin' home now, an' doin' nothin' but loaf an' pack his full name, which it's Frederick Dillingham Van Winkle. After the formalities had been gone through, Dill Pickle asked me to stay at his house a spell, he bein' a heap anxious to chin about the West an' cowfolks. I agreed to go him.

I got my valise an' my trunk—sure, I had a trunk, a brand-new one with brass edges—an' we piled into a box-sided automobile an'

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hit the trail for Dill's house. An' it was sure a house! Iron railin's an' lace curtains, an' a gent with more gold braid on him than General Miles opened the door. I looked for Dill Pickle to introdooce me, but he didn't. Later I found out General Miles was the butler.

It's near the chuck-time in the evenin' by now, an' Dill Pickle drug me up-stairs. He showed me a big room, an' says it's mine so long as I stay, an' the longer the better. Dill left me to wash up, an' I put on a new collar an' another suit. Nothin' like bein' proud when you're in Noo York.

Dill Pickle come for me at chuck-time an' led me down-stairs. He was all harnessed up in a hard-boiled shirt an' open-face suit. Only Dill's sister was home—his pa an' ma was away somewheres—but she made me welcome. She was good-lookin' as flowers in June too. I sure enjoyed that dinner.

Next morning I went down-town to get my nails manicoored. The little black-headed girl was busy, so I waited till she was through. They tried to shove me off on another girl, but I put the kybosh on that mighty quick.

"It's Miss O'Brien," I says, "or nobody."

Sure, her name was O'Brien—no relation to Jack. The sport she was trimmin' pulled his freight in ten minutes, an' I sat down in his place. The little girl thawed considerable this trip, an' I injuned round in my mind for an' openin' to ask if I could see her home. Final, she give me the openin'.

"A great many men," says she, "try to flirt with me."

"Next time any gent does," I says, "you tell me, an' I'll go over him like a landslide."

She laughed an' allowed she was able to manage her customers her own self. I told her she was sure one young capable woman, an' I'd be a heap pleased to know her better. She was out o' the corral before I could wink an eye, an' I had one savage time gettin' her back. I apologized, an' says how I didn't mean no harm, but if she could take me as a friend my cup of happiness would be brimful an' sloppin' over.

She shied some still, an' I talked away soothin' like I was gentlin' a colt, an' she come round final, an' went to dinner with me.

I went back to Dill Pickle's that night a hundred feet above the earth. That Miss O'Brien girl was the kind to get you up in the atmosphere. General Miles let me into Dill's house, an' I started through the hall for the stairs. Comin' down-stairs was a girl—one I'd never seen before. She was yellow-headed, with big, gray eyes, an' a complexion like a pan of cream. She was dressed in black, an' she walked like she didn't have no feet—kind o' graceful an' airy. I forgot Miss O'Brien instanter. I remembered her agin when the yellow-headed lady went by, an' I climbed them stairs thoughtful.

I seen a light under Dill Pickle's door, an' I busted in on him.

"Who is she?" I says.

"Who?" says Bill, who was undressin'.

"The girl in black," I says.

He shook his head, an' wriggled out of his shirt, after tellin' me I'd had one too many. I explained an' described, an' Dill laughed.

"She's Tommy's governess," says Dill. "Tommy's my six-year-old brother. You haven't seen him."

"If she's his keeper, I will," I says.

"But she's a governess," says Dill.

"What's that got to do with it?" I says. "She's a woman, ain't she? Pretty, ain't she? What more do you want?"

"I forgot," says Dill. "An' I was a cowboy once myself. I'll introdooce you tomorrow."

I FELL asleep that night seein' two women—one with black hair an' one with yellow. Next mornin' Dill kept his word. The girl's name was Costello, an' she was as pleasin' to talk to as she was to look at. She didn't seem interested in the West much, but that didn't worry me none. Miss O'Brien was the same way. In the afternoon I went down-town to see the black-headed one. I had my nails fixed—they was scraped nigh through by this time—an' took her to dinner. I didn't eat a whole lot. I spent most of the time sizin' her up, an' tryin' to see which was the heftiest in mind an' muscle of the two girls.

It was a stand-off. They both had good points. Miss O'Brien was the best talker, but Miss Costello was the best listener, an' that's one fine virtue for a wife to have. Miss O'Brien was a good cook—she said so, anyway—an' Miss Costello didn't know a kettle from a skillet. I might go broke some time, an' then Miss O'Brien would be the handiest to have around. But then Miss O'Brien couldn't sew, an' Miss

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Costello could drive a needle like forty dressmakers.

It was sure a whipsaw, an' I couldn't tell which one to whirl my rope at.

I fixed it to take Miss Costello to the theater the next night. Dill Pickle helped me there. He was mighty good about it, but I could see his sister didn't understand it none. She never said nothin', though. I guess she knowed it was no use.

Miss Costello an' me had a good time at that show, an' when the evenin' was over an' I was feelin' sorry I'd got outside of so much lobster, I was worse mixed up than ever. No human gent could choose between them girls. They were both corn-fed Morgan stock, an' sound in wind an' limb. I flipped a quarter that night to see which I'd ask to go West with me. I had it bad, you bet. Would you believe it, that piece of silver rolled round an' leaned up agin the leg of a chair just as straight up an' down as the wheel on a wagon.

I SEEN it was no use. Even luck wouldn't decide for me. I had to think of another way. I thought an' thought, an' final I worked out a little old plan that looked just too full of wisdom. Get 'em together. That was it. You can always tell which is the best of two hosses if they're both in front of you at the same time, when you can't if they ain't. If it's that way with cayuses, why not with girls? Sure, why not?

Of course, I couldn't do it right away. I had to get to know 'em both a lot better first. So I took 'em to dinner an' the theater separately for two weeks. I done that job up brown, an' I gave them girls a full fourteen days. Dill Pickle says as how young Tommy was cryin' himself to sleep each night Miss Costello was away, an' he wanted to know when the marriage was comin' off. I told him just to keep paws off an' let me run my own trail. He didn't know about Miss O'Brien.

It come to the day at last. I asked 'em both out to lunch, an' I told each of 'em she was goin' to meet another girl, I didn't say who. Both of 'em kind o' batted their eyes at it, an' asked for names, but I says that would come later, an' I kept a close mouth. I didn't want them to know nothin' about each other till they met.

Miss O'Brien was to be at the Grand Central Station at one o'clock. Miss Costello an' me went down together an' we walked into the waitin'-room. Miss O'Brien was sittin' down when we come in. She got up when she saw me, took one look at Miss Costello, an' I never seen a female move so quick. She was out in the street before I knowed it. I was astonished, an' I turned round to speak to Miss Costello, an' she was half-way to the opposite entrance.

I seen Miss O'Brien was plumb gone, so I took after Miss Costello an' demanded explanations. She wouldn't speak at first. She looked mad clean through.

"If I'd known," she says, "who your friend was, I would never have come."

"Why?" I says. "Do you know her?"

"Know her!" she says. "Know her! I guess I do know her! We were once both engaged to the same fellow!"

I had a sinkin' feelin' right where I lived.

"What's his name?" I says.

"Patrick Black," says she.

I almost had blind staggers at the way Luck had called the turn. Of course I didn't tell her Paddy Black was my partner. But me knowin' Miss O'Brien was enough. Accordin' to Miss Costello, Miss O'Brien was a she catamount, an' her friends—meanin' me—was worse. I seen it was no use to argue, so I let it go at that, an' took her home without waitin' a minute.

I still had one card left to play. I went down-town agin to see Miss O'Brien. She was plumb in the middle of a cold wave. She reminded me a lot of a Minnesota blizzard. What Miss Costello forgot to say Miss O'Brien remembered, an' her reasons for callin' me names was the same as the other one's. I lost out both ends of the table, that was plain, an' I moved back to my hotel that very afternoon. Sure, I'm goin' back to Idaho day after to-morrow.

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A Gilded Mirage

A Tale of Sunday's Boarding-House

by S. B. H. Hurst

SUNDAY was not making enough money. The reason was simple. The sailors' boarding-house keeper wanted more money than there was, or was ever going to be. So his schemes were many, and largely nefarious, and behold him, with a fine large Idea in his brain, calling on Captain George Butcher, master of the full-rigged ship *Martin Luther*, destined for Hongkong with a cargo of case-oil.

With great deference, the mate conducted Sunday to the cabin, where Butcher greeted him with much friendliness, withdrawing at once to the privacy of the Captain's room.

"Captain," began Sunday, without any preamble, "I want you to do a job for me that's got money in it."

"What kind of a job?" asked the Captain, with almost an air of servility for which he hated himself, and which, if seen by his crew, would have cost him his title of "Hard-Case skipper."

"Smuggling-job."

"Oh—opium?"

"No. I want something that can move itself without help, once I get it ashore. I want you to run a bunch of Chinks."

"Bring them all the way from Hongkong? Do you mean that?"

Sunday grinned at the other's annoyance—an annoyance so great that the better word for it were "anger;" an annoyance which, however, the Captain thought it the better part of wisdom to keep to himself.

"I don't care where they come from, so long it's the place the boss Chink here in N'York says."

"But, man, don't you see what you're asking me to do? I ain't got no passenger-license, and even if I had, why, you're asking too much, Mr. Sunday," said Butcher apprehensively.

"Afraid you'll get in trouble, eh?"

"Just that. All the crew will know about it. Can't hide a bunch of men, or even one, for a whole passage. There's too many on to it. Don't see how I can oblige you."

Sunday leaned closer to the sailor, who clenched his big fist as if he were going to smash the mocking face so close to his own; leaned forward and whispered something into the other's ear.

It was the same old threat with which he drove his runners to their dirty jobs—the threat of immediate giving of information to the police, regarding a straying from the path as laid out by the law. The option of certain trouble as against possible complications. And, as usual, it was effective.

"It's a —— of a chance, but I guess I got to take it," said the Captain at length, his face pale, and several beads of perspiration standing out on his forehead, although the room was quite cool.

"You'll get your instructions in Hongkong. See you carry them out right. And it would be a good idea for you not to write me or anything—I don't like to trust the mails too far. A feller will come aboard you in Hongkong, and tell you what to do, and, if you keep your nerve, there ain't no need to worry."

Without any question of reward—it was understood that Butcher was doing all this as a "favor" for Sunday—the boarding-house keeper left the ship, and went briskly on his way to arrange the other details.

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AN HOUR later he walked into the "Hop Sing" laundry, and inquired of the oriental person, who ceased his ironing of a shirt for a moment to listen, as to the whereabouts of one Lee Fung.

"You wantee speekee him?" asked the Chinaman with irritating blandness.

"Sure! What do you think I——"

"All lightee. Don't getee mad. I fetchee him. Slit down and waitee."

So Sunday stood around, for there was no chair, and watched the siphon-like operations of the laundry-workers. He waited some time, since oriental diplomacy hath it that waiting is good for the other party, and when the messenger returned and told him that Lee Fung was down-stairs (where he had been all the time) the boarding-house keeper's temper was very much ruffled. He had been an autocrat so long that he had almost forgotten that there were people in the world whom he did not have "something on," or who did not owe him money.

Very gingerly he descended the narrow wooden stairway, while the Chinamen ceased ironing to make remarks about his personal appearance, and his probable reason for seeking the interview with the powerful person below-stairs.

There was more to going down-stairs than the narrow stairway of wood. This ended in a passage, along which Sunday walked for a dozen yards. Then came more stairs, still descending, and at the foot of these he was met by a youth who guided him to the sanctum of the wealthy Chinaman with whom the boarding-house keeper had done some strange business in his time.

"How do?" said Lee Fung, dwelling long on his vowels, to disguise the fact that he spoke a better brand of English than his guest, and motioning the guest to a chair.

As he took his seat, Sunday made a mental comparison between this very luxuriant oriental den and his own dingy office—the silk hangings on the walls reminded him that the mildewed paper at home was falling off and drooping like torn battle-flags in many places. Then, too, the dusty twain of chairs he possessed were hardly as comfortable as the cushioned, clustered resting-places here inviting him to recline. In spite of his egotism, he felt that the grave-eyed celestial dominated the material things of his home with an ease and careless grace that he himself did not even know the spirit of.

"How do, Lee?" replied Sunday, trying to put on the white man's arrogance as a mantle, and failing signally.

"What for you want see me?" asked the Chinaman, filling his absurd little brass pipe, and veiling with an effort the expression of contempt his visitor was responsible for.

"Talk business," said Sunday.

The man at the uplifting of whose little finger men lived or died, made no reply.

"How much you pay me smuggle Chink?" said Sunday, plunging as he was wont into the deal on hand, and into his most approved form of pidgin-English at the same time.

"How far you smuggle him?"

"Any lonely place on the coast you say. You pay me cash on delivery."

"Got a ship?"

"I've got the skipper of the *Martin Luther* fixed where I want him. All you've got to do is to arrange for your man in Hongkong to get his Chinks from Canton, or wherever he gets them, and put 'em on board the *Luther*. I delivers them to you on the beach, collects, and the job's done."

The Chinaman regarded him for a long time in silence. His calm scrutiny embarrassed Sunday, who twisted around on his comfortable chair somewhat like a worm on a fish-hook; and who, after standing the silence as long as he could, blurted out:

"Well?"

"How much you want?" suggested the Chinaman.

"Five hundred a head—I need the money," said Sunday, trying to be jocular. "I'm letting you off cheap at that," he added.

"Very," said Lee Fung dryly.

"Well, their passage from Hongkong ain't going to cost you anything, and you will see to it that they all belong to your own tong."

"Two good reasons. But as far as that goes, the passage won't cost you anything, if I know you at all."

Sunday stared a little at the correct English.

"Is it a go?" he asked.

The Chinaman reflected.

"I can arrange for a hundred coolies, through a friend in Hongkong. But how you know the ship come back here? May go Europe."

"All the more trouble for Butcher," said Sunday, with a laugh.

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"So?" murmured Lee Fung.

"That's so," repeated the boarding-house keeper. "I get the money, and he takes the risk. All I do is give them a passage ashore in a steam-launch; then you get 'em. But be sure the fifty thousand is good money. I had the counterfeit-game worked on me once before, and I'd take a chance in jail by squealing if it happens again," he concluded with an agressive movement of his chin.

"I don't deal in bad money," said Lee Fung, eying his visitor with much disfavor. "But five hundred a head is too much."

"I won't take a cent less," snapped Sunday.

"Maybe I don't want any coolies brought in," said Lee Fung.

"You must have changed a lot," answered Sunday. "But if——"

"Never mind. I'll do it. But how will you know when to meet the ship?"

"Butcher will get himself reported by a mail-boat in lots of time for me to get out. I'll be ready about the time he's due."

"Sail-ships are a bit uncertain," remarked the Chinaman.

"The *Luther* runs on time almost like a steamer—never saw such a feller as Butcher to make passages. But you leave it to me. You be ready to meet me when you get the word, with automobiles or whatever way you're going to run 'em in," said Sunday.

Lee Fung waved his hand, closing the interview, and the boarding-house keeper left the place quite satisfied, for he knew that the Chinaman's word was as good as his bond.

THE *Martin Luther* made a good passage to Hongkong, discharged her cargo, and loaded, contrary to custom, for Hamburg. The news did not not worry Sunday, who knew that Butcher would go far out of his way to "oblige" him. So it happened that when the *Arrogant* was reported by one of the Bermuda boats, Sunday was one of the few people in New York interested in shipping who did not puzzle over the apparent mistake in signals. For Butcher had agreed to fly the numbers of the other vessel, so that his owners would not become aware of his being out of his course.

Down the bay went the boarding-house keeper in a powerful steam-launch, with his two faithful runners as crew.

They sighted the *Martin Luther* after they had been at sea less than two days.

The sun had just set, leaving the sea as calm as a mill-pond. Sunday certainly had the best of weather-luck on all his undertakings that needed it, and the launch went alongside almost as easily as if they had been in dock. Sunday climbed up the ladder, and Butcher met him at the rail.

"Got 'em?" asked the boarding-house keeper.

"Sure. But come below a little. We'd better wait till it gets darker before putting the Chinks in your boat. You never can tell who might snoop around."

"All right," said Sunday, following the Captain below; noticing that he was trembling as if with fear.

"Scared?" he asked when they got into the cabin.

"A little bit. It's been fierce having all these Chinks for the passage, and besides, I'm bound for Hamburg, and it wouldn't do for me to be seen round here."

Sunday grinned with enjoyment of the other's unhappiness.

"Nobody's going to see you in the dark," he sneered.

"I hope not. But, say, Mr. Sunday, don't you think you ought to give me something for doing this? You must be making all of fifty thousand out of it."

"Won't give you a cent," declared Sunday.

"I don't want money," answered the Captain, in so cringing a way that if any of his crew, who had cursed his hardness for over a hundred and twenty days, had heard him, they would not have believed their ears.

"What is it then?"

"I want you to sign certain papers—fix it so that I can not be sent up for—well, you know what for."

"If I do that, I won't have any hold on you; and I may want another job doing some time."

"Maybe I'd be willing to oblige. I think I would."

Sunday considered. He was feeling unusually generous and good-natured.

"There's lots of others," went on Butcher. "You've got lots of others to do things because they must. Fix things with me so that I might do a job for you because I wanted to."

The boarding-house keeper took a chew of

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tobacco, and listened to the steward laying the table for supper in the cabin; glanced at the Captain, who was leaning against his bunk, clasping and unclasping his hands with anxiety; drummed his fingers on the sextant-case and squinted at the "telltale" compass overhead

"All right, Butcher," he said condescendingly. "I'll sign 'em, and give them to you when the Chinks is in the launch."

And he smiled in what Butcher thought was a friendly way, while, as a matter of fact, he was thinking:

"Poor fool! I ain't got a thing on him. Its queer how these hard cases aboard ship are so scared about shore-law! I've seen a feller that could lick a whole watch faint, almost, because he was sued for a laundry-bill."

"Thank you," said the Captain, vastly relieved. "I'm much obliged, Mr. Sunday. The Chinks is all right; and if you're ready, it's about time to get 'em out."

So Sunday signed the papers that were given him and they left the cabin.

The Chinamen were soon transshipped, and the boarding-house keeper gave the Captain the signed papers. The launch cast off, the ship's yards were trimmed and they soon lost each other in the darkness.

The coast was made without incident, and Connolly was sent ashore in the dory which had been towing astern of the larger boat, to see if Lee Fung was at the rendezvous. He returned shortly with the news that everything was all right, and the work of putting the coolies on land began; Sunday himself going in the first boat.

Lee Fung greeted him with much courtesy, and they stood whispering together while the work of disembarking went on.

"Got the money?" asked Sunday.

"Right here," answered Lee Fung, tapping his breast. "I agreed to pay you fifty thousand dollars for bringing into the country a hundred Chinese coolies in defiance of the law, and I am ready to keep my bargain."

"'S all right," said the boarding-house keeper happily.

The two runners worked hard, and the Chinamen were soon on shore. The last one to land gave Lee Fung a letter, which he politely asked Sunday's permission to read, saying that he expected it was from his friend in Hongkong.

Sunday, equally polite, gave the desired permission, and the Chinaman snapped on a pocket flash-light and broke the seal.

He read it carefully, and gave an exclamation of surprise. Then he passed the letter and the light to Sunday. Here is a copy:

On board the *Martin Luther*.

DEAR LEE,

The compradore in Hongkong is an old friend of mine. I once did him a great service. So, acting on his advice, I cabled my owners to take out a passenger's license, and arranged for the hundred Chinamen to pay me half the regular mail-steamer rate—the owners allowing me a small bonus for getting the business. All the passengers are naturalized American citizens, coming back from a trip home, so there is no smuggling. Sunday thinks there is, but I don't care now, because I am going to get him to sign certain papers before he goes off my ship (if he don't sign them, he won't go). Sunday will have all his trouble for nothing, for you agreed to pay for smuggled Chinamen, not for American citizens. I feel almost square with Sunday.

Your friend,
GEORGE BUTCHER.

Sunday broke his rule regarding swearing aloud, and continued the use of very bad language until Lee Fung said:

"I sincerely hope you don't think I had anything to do with this deceit! But, of course, I can not pay you for bringing men ashore who have as much right here as you and I."

Sunday did not answer. He got into the dory and was rowed off to the launch, while Lee Fung said a word or two to the other Chinamen.

When he arrived in Hamburg, Captain Butcher received some registered mail. The contents of the package were a draft, and the following:

DEAR CAPTAIN,

Enclosed please find draft for ten thousand dollars, which is a hundred dollars a head for the hundred coolies your man Sunday smuggled through for me. He fell for the stall (to use slang), as you said he would, and never even asked to see the false naturalization-papers, which I had ready. I saved forty thousand dollars by acting on your suggestion, and you make a nice little sum. I thank you.

Your friend,
LEE FUNG.

Cash the draft, and destroy this letter.

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Liz

by W. Townend

EIGHT bells rang out from the bridge and Mr. Harrington, the second engineer of the *Umballa*, came on deck, his watch being over now. I waited till he spoke.

For a few minutes he stood and gazed into the star-lit blue of the night with his elbows on the gunwale, then he crossed over and seated himself by my side on the hatch.

"We'll reach Algiers about ten o'clock to-morrow morning," he said.

"There ought to be some letters from home, eh?" said I.

Mr. Harrington nodded. "I expect so."

He rubbed some ship's tobacco between his palms and filled a short black clay, one of his most valued possessions.

"Letters from home," he said slowly. "I expect so. At Algiers, eh! Letters at Algiers!"

I glanced at him in the darkness.

"There's always letters at Algiers," he went on; "an' once upon a time I used to look for them myself. Used to count the hours between each port. But never again! Never again! There's nobody left to write, and I'm glad of it. Algiers, eh! Yes, there'll be letters at Algiers all right."

Mr. Harrington lit his pipe and then related this story, exactly as I have set it down:

DID I ever tell you about when I was a chief engineer? Yes, chief engineer—me! An' a good one, too; for three whole voyages before the trouble came an' I lost my job. It wasn't my fault—but perhaps it was. I dunno', but it doesn't matter now one way or the other.

The first two voyages I made as chief engineer of the *Nagasaki* I had a chap called McAllister as my second. I'd known Dan McAllister on and off a matter of five years, an' yet I didn't know him at all. The best man that ever walked in some ways an' the queerest. I couldn't understand him.

One day he'd be as happy as a ship-chandler, whistlin' from mornin' to night or playin' on his mouth-organ till I got fair sick of it. The next, he'd be as sulky as a skypilot in charge of a seaman's mission, when money isn't comin' in quite as plentiful as it should. An' when he was like that he—well, he'd be apt to lift his elbow a bit.

Whether or no, he took an intelligent interest in the engines, did Dan, an' he had good prospects, too, as the superintendent had promised to send him as chief on the next ship that fell vacant. Which, as it so happened, was mine. But Dan wasn't made chief, because—well, that's not the yarn I'm telling you now.

A clever engineer, all the same, was Dan;

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and I could give nobody higher praise than that. For I tell you, son, this is Gospel-truth. A man who understands engines thoroughly—marine engines—having more than a superficial knowledge of top an' bottom ends, main bearin's, connectin'-rods, cranks an' such like; a man, in other words, who could run the engines of the *Nagasaki* without numerous breakdowns, should be able to run the British Empire or a parliament in Dublin or referee an England and Wales rugger-match at Cardiff without blinkin'.

DAN McALLISTER had got married a year or so before I went on the *Nagasaki*, an' he just worshiped the ground his wife trod on. It was pitiful to see him. What she'd a mind for, that girl must have, no matter the cost. Nothing was too good for her. And him only a second, remember!

What was the consequence, eh? The usual. He couldn't call his soul his own. A nice-looking youngster, he was, too; a husband any girl might have been proud of. An' yet Liz never seemed over an' above grieved when he went away. What do you make of that, eh? Rather pleased than anything it seemed. She could have had hundreds of better men than Dan, we all knew that, of course. Better financially, I mean. But she chose Dan. An' why? It's beyond me.

Anyhow, on my second voyage as chief, the *Nagasaki* discharged case-oil at Patras an' Piræus—after about the worst Western Ocean trip, the very worst, I ever remember—an' got orders for Galatz, up past Sulina. There we loaded maize, after a long lie, an' started home, bound for Belfast.

Well, we had lovely weather, fair breezes, blue sky an' calm sea. You could eat your meals in comfort without holdin' on to the table with one hand an' your hash with the other. There were next to no trouble on board, and even the stoke-hole hands had settled down to—in a manner of speakin'—fairly efficient work.

We touched in at Algiers for bunkers as usual, an' the coal-merchant's clerk come aboard with a pile of letters an' papers for the ship.

The mess-room lad gave me a couple from home, from the old man an' Fanny, an' some newspapers, an' asked me if I knew where the second were.

"There's a letter for him," he says.

"You'll find him in the engine-room," says I, an' goes aft to see when the lighters would be alongside.

The ship was swarmin' with bumboat-women, of course, an' what with one thing and another, keepin' an eye on the blacks alongside, seein' that they didn't dump half the coal overboard to fish it up after we'd gone, as is customary in these regions, I never set eyes on the second till we were under way again.

SON! I never seen such an awful change in a man, in so short a time in all my life. He was just gray color and about ten years older than at dinner. He sat down to tea, and, naturally, fresh meat having come aboard, I thought he would make a good meal after a mixed menoo of salt-horse an' Chicago. Not he. He looked at his plate, took a gulp of tea an' clattered out. Which, as you know, is not the custom.

Till we reached the Rock, I never heard him speak to a single soul except when he cursed the donkeyman or the fireman on his watch. The language at sea is not, as a rule, refined, but if you'll believe me, I fair shuddered when I heard Dan McAllister swearin'. And at last I spoke to him.

"Look here," I says, one mornin' after breakfast; "what's the matter? You're not eatin'; you won't talk. What is it? Have you had bad news from home?"

"*Mister* Harrington," says he, as politely as you please, "as long as I do my work, what the —— does it matter to you how I go on?"

After that, of course, I let 'im go his own way, though I'm not in the habit, as a general rule, of takin' back-answers from any man. And I was chief then, too.

But Dan did his work all right, there was nothin' to find fault with for that, so I just let him be without bothering him. This was what puzzled *me*, though. Whenever he'd a spare minute to himself in the engine-room, he'd be reading a letter. I watched him through the gratings many a time, when he thought no one was lookin'.

Yes, there'd he be, reading that letter over and over again. And, of course, I knew it must be the letter he'd got at Algiers, and I wondered what it said an' so on. But I knew it could only be from one person and I didn't like to think what she'd written.

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Poor old Dan! We're all alike; the best an' the worst.

After we passed Finisterre we struck a reg'lar North Atlantic breeze: head-winds, heavy seas an' squalls generally, day after day. Nothin' really bad, you'll understand, but uncomfortable. Sometimes we couldn't make more than a knot or two in a four-hour watch, which grows a bit wearisome, so to speak, after a while, especially on a tub like the *Nagasaki*. But, at last, we left the Bay behind us and I began to think that the worst was over and that we'd have fair weather up the Irish Sea. Did we? Ugh!

One night, just before twelve, I was sittin' in my berth, waitin' for eight bells so's I could turn in in peace an' comfort, when I heard Dan start in to talk in his room next door. I thinks to myself: "Well, I can stand the whole weight of the Irish Sea bangin' away overhead, an' the noise of the pots an' pans takin' charge in the galley above, also the whistle goin' in the squalls, but I'll be —— if I can stand Mr. Dan McAllister conductin' an orat-orio next door at midnight."

Eight bells struck, an' then I heard him shout—reg'larly shout: "All right, Liz, have it your own way. I don't care." An' then in an ordinary voice:

"You don't mean it, Liz dear, come now, be honest!"

Then he gives a laugh an' says,

"I'm not goin' to be a drag on you; do as you like. Give's a kiss, though, Liz, please."

Well, I rushed out into the alleyway.

"McAllister," I says, hammerin' at his door, "shut up! And if you don't want to sleep, remember there are others aboard this ship that do."

That settled him, and I went back into my berth. But it's not the nicest thing in the world to have a man next door begin a private and confidential conversation with nobody in the dead of the night.

To tell you the honest truth, I thought at first he'd been drinkin'. But, for one thing, he'd scarce touched a drop since we'd left New York an', for another, I knew for a fact, there wasn't a bottle of whisky in the ship. Five days, almost, in the Bay had seen to that all right.

The next day was gray an' dirty. The wind had shifted to west'ard, an' was full on the beam. We'd got a list on us, of course, an' the old hooker was rollin' like a fireman in Tiger Bay on a Saturday night, fair tryin' to buck the shaft out of her.

Well, everybody was sick of life, prayin' for Belfast an' simply spoilin' for argument an' mischief. I found the mate down in the engine-room after breakfast, lookin' like a drowned rat in his oilskins, swearin' an' cursin' worse'n a heathen missionary because he'd hung up his spare blankets to dry over the cylinder-tops, an' they'd got swamped when we shipped a sea.

The —— fool! What did he expect? I asked him. We might have moved 'em, he said. And at that I told him what I thought of him an' what he was an' what would become of him. The engineers never have anything to do, of course.

It was a miserable day, that. The galley was washed out early on, an' the cook sent up a dinner of salt-water hash an' moldy spuds. A most appetizing repast. We didn't touch it in the mess-room. As for the cabin—well, the steward an' the dinner parted company on the well-deck, and it was not the steward that went overboard.

In the afternoon watch, it began to clear up an' the wind dropped. But the sea was still high with long rollers an' the *Nagasaki* was still plunging about in a most melancholy way.

ABOUT six o'clock that evenin' I was in my berth, makin' out a list of the stores I wanted for the next voyage, when, all of a sudden, there was an explosion in the engine-room.

I knew what it were, an' simply jumped up from off the settee an' got a new gage-glass out of the drawer. I thought I heard a kind of scream down below, but I didn't take it in fully, you'll understand, till later. I made my way down on to the gratin's, where the steam lay as thick as a Mersey fog, an' scrambled down the ladder like a three-year-old.

The lamps were all lit, and I shouts out: "Here, McAllister, fix this on!"

It was not Dan, though, but the donkey-man who was shuttin' the cocks off, to turn off the steam. He'd been in the engine-room lookin' for something he'd lost. I supposed maybe Dan was up the shaft-tunnel, which, by the way, was as poisonous as could be, owin' to the maize in the holds bein' damp an' the ventilator on the well-deck bein' battened down with a block of wood an' some canvas.

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"Where's the second?" says I.

I heard a silly kind of a laugh behind me, an' there standin' in the doorway leadin' to the stoke-hole with a grip on the rail was Dan.

It was awful. Son, I near screamed, as I caught sight of him. You never saw anything like it. The glass had exploded right in his face, as he looked at it. Understand! In his face!

Well, I sent the donkeyman up to wake the third, and fixed the new glass on before doing anything else. When I'd finished I saw the fireman, a Squarehead, staring out of the doorway, and I remember now wonderin' what an ill-favored hangdog cur he was. He pointed with his finger toward the ladder.

"Look!" says he.

I turned, an' there nearly up to the gratin's was Dan clingin' on when the ship swung back.

I rushed up after him, shouting for the third to take charge down below.

Dan hoisted himself through the alleyway, up the steps, laughin' a bit, an' then kind of groanin', "I'm blind, I'm blind," as he opened the door of the scuttle.

"Come back, Dan," I says, "for God's sake!"

But not he. I followed at his heels out on to the well-deck an' grabbed his arm.

"What is it, Dan?" says I, an' he hit me on the mouth.

"Leave go," he shouts. "Let me be, you fool! Leave go!"

The *Nagasaki* was rolling bad an' we slid into the port scuppers, fightin' in the darkness. An' then the whole of the seven seas swept over us. We were carried straight across the deck by the bulkheads into the starboard scuppers, my head crashed against the bitts, an' I don't remember any more till I found myself on my feet helping the donkeyman drag Dan McAllister into his own berth. . . . See this ridge on my head? And this bump behind my ear? Not to mention the two front teeth that parted company from their fellows!

Well, we put Dan to bed, an' I never want a job like it again. What could we do? God help the man that gets smashed up on a tramp steamer! We did our best, the old man and I, with hot water and bandages and so on, but—I dunno; it was pretty hopeless. He lay on his back, scarcely breathin', just now an' again givin' a little groan. An' his eyes! Poor old Dan!

Only one thing he said. "Harrington, why didn't you leave me alone?" That was all.

He'd meant to drown himself. He had so. A gage-glass can burst a thousand times an' nothin' will happen, but it had caught Dan fair in the face. Fair in the face. But why had he wanted to drown himself like that? An' why had he been so queer since we'd left Algiers? I tell you, son, I did a deal of hard thinkin' that night.

Anyway, puttin' things together, I began to wonder what was on the scrap of paper that he'd been readin' over an' over again in the engine-room. It would be from his wife, of course. I'd known that all along, but I wanted to know what to do when we reached Belfast. I found the letter in his jacket an' read it through. It was the old story, naturally.

Liz was going off with some one else. She was tired of Dan. Her "dear Dan," she said. She was sorry, an' sent her love! Poor Dan! Son, I just sat an' stared at that letter till I couldn't see. Do they *ever* give a thought to what they write in the letters? Or to the men that read them?

The skipper came out of Dan's berth an' beckoned me on to the gratin's.

"Do you think he'll live?" says he under his breath.

"Live!" says I. An' then I thought of Dan's face an' blind eyes an' the letter in my hand, all smeared with oil, an' what was written in it. "Live?" says I. "I hope not!"

The skipper just opens his mouth, kind of bewildered, but doesn't say a word. "Yes," says I. "I hope he dies."

And, son, I did. I prayed that he'd die before morning. *My* prayers never do much good, however. Dan didn't die, as it happened: nor was he quite blinded. But he lost the sight of one eye, an'—well, poor old Dan, he wasn't quite the same to look at afterward.

"Well," says the old man, "let her have all she can stand."

Which I did. I drove the old *Nagasaki* as she hadn't been driven before; whacked an extra knot out of her somehow, and early the next forenoon we reached Belfast.

ABOUT twenty minutes after we'd tied up alongside, I was leaning on the rail amidships near the chart-room, when I seen some one I knew coming up the quay, by the sheds. Yes, it was Liz

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right enough, a shadow of what she had been when I last met her; thin an' tired-lookin'.

I didn't know what was goin' to happen or what she wanted or anything, save that she had come across from Tyneside to Belfast to meet the *Nagasaki*. The third engineer and the second mate were talkin' by my side, an' as soon as they seen who it were they lit out an' left me. No; it wasn't a nice job.

But Liz climbs on board an' comes up to where I stood. I never moved.

"Mr. Harrington," says she, "can you tell me where Dan is?"

"What," says I, "do you want with Dan? If I remember rightly," I says, "you wrote a letter."

An' there I stops, feeling as if I'd struck her. She was lookin' at me in a crazy, half-daft way, an' she whispers, "Mr. Harrington, where's my husband? I've been here for a week, waitin' for the ship to come in and bring him back to me."

I couldn't speak and she clutched my arm. "Mr. Harrington," she says in a dull kind of voice, "I did not do what I said I was goin' to do. I swear it. I sent—sent the other," she says, "away in time. But it was too late. The ship had left Algiers and I couldn't let Dan know an' I knew what he'd be thinkin' me."

Then she shakes me gently.

"Where is he, can't you tell me?"

I felt sick when I thought of it. Dan with the letter at Algiers an' the girl at home at South Shields, just killin' herself because of what she had written. An', mind, there was no way of lettin' him know that she had not gone off with the other man.

It doesn't take long to bunker at Algiers, a few hours maybe, an' you're off again. An' then it was too late, wireless telegraphy not havin' been introduced on to tramp steamers like the *Nagasaki*, an' not likely to be. Just imagine it! That poor girl waitin' with her man at sea. It took us twelve days to reach Belfast, too, what with head winds an' one thing an' another.

But, "Where's my husband?" says she once more.

"Liz," says I, an' I needed all my strength to do it, "Liz, something happened last night. There was an explosion in the engine-room."

"Was he killed?" she says quietly. "Tell me quick, was he killed?"

"No," says I, "but he's badly hurt; more than badly. We're waitin' for the doctors."

"Take me to him, please," she says.

I led the way down to Dan's berth an' opened the door. He was lyin' very quiet, his eyes an' face covered with bandages, which were all red in places an' not nice to look at.

"Who's that?" he says.

His lips an' chin was all that showed.

"Who is it? Why can't you leave me alone, Harrington? Why can't I die peaceful?"

"Dan," says I, "Dan, here's some one to see you."

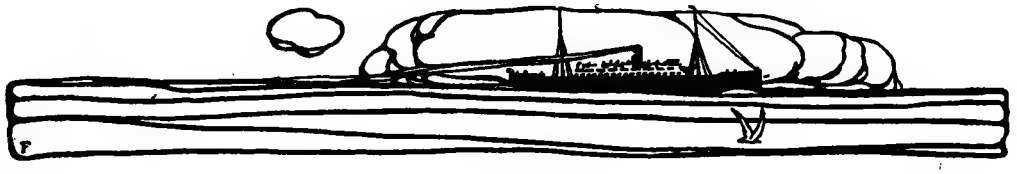
Liz goes over very softly an' stands by the bunk with her head bowed.

"Is it you, Liz?" says Dan.

The girl bent over him cryin' to herself.

"Dan," she says, "I didn't do it. I don't know what made me write that letter. I saw what I was goin' to do, an' what he was, and I sent him away when it was too late. You'd left Algiers and I nearly went mad, an' Dan dear——"

She couldn't say any more. But Dan just gave a little sigh an' put his arms round her, an' then I went out an' left them by themselves.



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The Orchid of Allure

by Patrick Casey

A Free Translation of the Report of Herr Fritz Hoffrahm, Explorer for the Hamburgische Gesellschaft

CHAPTER I

JUNGLE-MIST

WE WERE too long, *mein Kamerad* and I, altogether too long in that vast network of gloomy, soundless jungle, plodding through the rotting growths and black crawling muck after the orchid that ever lured and ever evaded. The jeers of monkeys had been our only companionship for days. They had poisoned our souls.

A fortnight gone, obeying the orders to penetrate the evil entrails of Borneo, we had embarked on the broad slow-gliding River Barito at Banjermasin. There were five men to the fifteen-foot *gobang*—the canoe of the Dyaks. *Mein Kamerad* was with me, and three guides. They were Sea-Dyaks from near Tobanio, brown-skinned, snub-nosed little fellows of fine proportions for all their five and a half feet. Excepting the *jawat*, a long strip of cloth hanging between their legs, their only other dress consisted of many and queer ornaments, most of which were heavy earrings of odds and ends of brass that drew down the lobes of their ears to the shoulders. I liked their eyes. Though small, they were resolute.

The river presently developed into a broad stretch of oozing mud, on either hand of which gigantic trees burdened with veritable hanging-gardens of orchids, parasitical vegetation, ferns and dangling lianas formed a leafy interwoven canopy over our heads. Through the depth of this overdrooping wood the sun sparingly filtered in broken rays. The air beneath was hot like steam, and heavy with vegetable-odors that lay like a load on lungs and brains.

Sometimes, however, the interlaced arcade would open out into miles of flat country cleared for planting paddy or in secondary forest-growth; or into a stretch of jungle felled and burning to permit of planting. The air, viscid and motionless at best, at these times was choking with ashes, the heat stifling like furnace and the withering sun so obscured by smoke as to throw over all the primeval surroundings a monstrous reddish glare. Later on, we glimpsed through thick luxuriant forest the gleaming white of limestone mountains.

The night of the twelfth day fell black, without moon; beneath that tangle of foliage just thick inky dark. We decided to camp ashore. As we neared the bank, swishing and snapping through the wall of ferns and leaves, one of the Dyaks leaped out to draw us in.

There was a sudden scurry of monitor-lizards through the black water. That sent the Dyak helter-skelter back to the *gobang*. It denoted the presence of crocodiles.

But as he put one leg over the side of the canoe in jumping in, a crocodile that had been moored to the bank beneath the trail-

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ing growths like a log in a backwater had him by the other foot. He screamed terribly. The boat rocked so that I thought it would capsize. Then his hold on the side broke. He sank into water; was gone. It was uncannily dark, but we plugged holes in the huge reptile as it lay dormant beneath the growths.

Next morning, when they cut it open, the guides withdrew from it the crushed bones and cotton clothes of their fellow. The very knot was still in his *jawat*.

Next day the river narrowed and flowed clear and deep, without mud. We left all tributaries behind, passed Pitch Lake and began an up-hill struggle against a strong, steady current. We determined to leave the stream and make northwest across country through the *rhuk* for the mountains at the headwaters of the River Kapoeas.

AS WE paddled and poled slowly up, looking for a landing, suddenly on the right-hand bank burst out a clearing fully half an acre in extent. It was the first sign of human habitation we had met with in weeks. As we debarked, we saw beneath the snaky tendrils of creepers draggling in the water a six-foot Dyak canoe—a *gobang* half smothered with parasitical plants and rapid-growing fungoid vegetation.

Hanging to the roof of a *boma*—as in East Africa the open grass hut in the clearing would be called—were several score orchid-plants, withered and dead. On the earth floor of the hut that was acrawl with fecund life lay two rusty Springfields and two headless skeletons. Out by the ashy place where the fire had been was a third skeleton, minus its head. Up between its ribs had sprung some sweat-encrusted weeds.

Death had flitted suddenly out of the jungle on the orchid-hunters and their servant like an ape out of the night. Just as they were ready to go "out" with a fortune in orchids, the head-hunters had got them.

Added to all we had undergone, the sight plucked on my raw nerves. The sweat was pouring from our bodies and the air was stale and damp and feverish—suffocating with the heavy stench of rotting bones and vegetation.

I ordered Hath-Na-Veng, one of the remaining guides, to shin up a tall banana-tree to see if from the top he could get any signs of a *barrio* near. He refused. A deadly snake nested in the tree, he said. How he knew it, I do not know. But he was afraid.

Burke, *mein Kamerad*, sprang at him.

"Won't, eh!" he shouted.

He struck the little fellow to the ground there beside the headless skeleton. He handed him his hunting-knife.

"Bring down that snake's head!" he commanded.

Whining and trembling, the boy went up the swaying trunk. We stood below and sweated. He had neared the top when a thing like a black spear—a huge long bari snake—suddenly reached out from where it had been lying concealed on a limb and struck at his wrist. He screamed with terror and toppled headlong down. He writhed pitiably a moment with pain, then stretched out lifeless.

Burke swung on me. Ere the boy died, he swung on me.

"Satisfied?" he snarled.

"But you made him go up," I objected limply.

His yellow eyeballs gleamed and his face went purple beneath its Tropic saffron and smut of beard. His eyes fought mine with a direct withering fire.

"—— you!" he fairly screamed. "Don't blame me. You'd have made him go, if I hadn't. You did it, you did it! The poor kid."

And he kicked the body.

I made no answer. I knew any answer I made would only exasperate that frame of raw nerves called Burke. You have heard of the terrible tempers that men develop where there are only a few together detached from the world in a great cold loneliness of ice. But how about the tempers of men alone in a forest of labyrinthine vegetation and close unceasing gloom, with disease and swift decay ever stalking their heels like a snake through the fetid lush!

I tell you we had been too long, *mein Kamerad* and I, altogether too long in that world of festering silence. The stillness and the heat, the sudden deaths and the choking growths, but especially the awful stillness, had been the jungle lathe that had worn down our nerves to the bleeding quick.

GLOOMY and silent, we divided the duffel in three parts, hid the *gobang* beneath the snaky tendrils of ferns and lianas and started up a runway scoured by the rains and feet of a century.

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We were in the dark heart of Borneo. Burke no longer spoke to me.

And, God knows, I am a social animal. For all my years in the tropics, I knew only a word or two of Dyak. I could not talk to the guide as *mein Kamerad* could. He laughed often in a hard way. I grew morbid. I heard him sneer about the *kopo-kopo-utan*. That was the orchid, the jungle butterfly. I intuitively felt that he was telling the guide I was a "loony orchid-chaser."

The little brown fellow came to eye me with black pupils drawn small with suspicion. I knew he thought I had brought all the trouble upon them.

All that night I sat by the slow smoking fire and slept very little, for fear they would abandon me in the unbreathing dark. Through the hot day I followed in their tracks. I could not trust them to be behind my back. I was like a nerve dangling from a broken tooth, pained and jumping at every movement, each hot breath of air. It was no small matter for me to keep a cool hand on myself. I knew I had to. I would have strangled both of them.

About meridian of the following day, I stopped to cover my feet with cloths to keep the rank cogon-grass from cutting them. My boots had fallen to pieces. My watchful partner saw well what I had paused to do, but did not halt. When I looked up again, after a minute or so, neither he nor the guide was in sight. Trees and ferns and creepers seemed to grow inch by inch as I looked about. The grass sweated up waist high. A hot mist closed me in from above.

I shouted and in a panic started up the lush-tangled runway of the Dyaks. All day I shouted. When tropic night swooped down and all was humid oppressive stillness, I was alone in that jungle of mystery and fear, of death and disease swift and silent and horrible.

I camped, that night, in a festering hollow of unwholesome vegetation and built a fire of dead and moldy wood and sat beside its snaky spire of smoke through the hours that were as black as Abaddon, as long as torture in hell, but without hell's gladdening clamor—just motionless, soundless dark, without the faintest ghostly rustle of a breeze. And for the first time in all the years I had worked for the Hamburgische Gesellschaft, I thought of turning back.

You have heard of the House. The House sells everything from lions to orchids. From Pole to Pole, round with the broiling Line and back again, all sections of the whirling globe have yielded some animal, some product to the House. Its antennæ are men on barnacled ships in uncharted seas; men like *mein Kamerad* and me, who rot on the outer hem, yet are supposed to act as its nerve-ends whenever the order comes from Hamburg.

The order this time was for the Trevor Orchid. Yes; the Trevor Orchid. You have heard of that little parasite if ever you have been toasted by the tropics. If you ever have touched on the burning beaches of Borneo, you will be even more in-the-know. The Kapoeas Dyaks have deified the Trevor Orchid.

SIR HUGH TREVOR was a Belgian from Austruweel who, upon getting an appointment with the British East India Company back in the early '40's, had promptly been naturalized as an Englishman. Several years later he threw over this appointment and sarawaked with Rajah Brooke in northwest Borneo, carrying through the jungle uplands one mailed fist for the Queen and one open hand outreaching for the daintiest blooms in creation.

For he was an orchid-hunter. And this intoxicating chase it was that led him finally into the evil entrails of Borneo, where near the headwaters of the River Kapoeas his expedition was attacked by wild head-hunters. His Minie-rifles had little effect on the multitude of flitting jungle devils with their poisoned spears, krises, bolos, *parangs* and *sumpitans*. With the remnants of his band, he sought shelter in a *totong* or fever-swamp.

Here a slender dart from a blow-gun quiveringly impaled itself in his temple. Legend had it that when they searched the swamp for his body the natives found a wonderful orchid languishing from it. But that it clung to the hole in his skull I never credited, attributing the connection to the fact that the Kapoeas Dyaks are notorious head-hunters.

In any event, the savages stood in superstitious awe of the fragile growth of gossamer. And in the end the story seeped down to the Java coast that they had exalted the bloom to the rank of a god and that it was

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carefully nurtured and close-confined in a *dobo* or rattan-barred feast-house.

Its hue was commonly held to be a delicate blood-crimson flush spotted daintily with snow-white mottlings. Spots in orchids, you know, are considered signs of individuality. But I have heard it described as having all the colors, all the blends known to man, with an appearance not unlike an Armenian's brilliant robes or the fluttering wings of a butterfly under the rays of the sun. They with artistic imaginations related that it was of hues indescribable, a languorous sad sigh from the jungle.

It was even said to be poisonous, with an exhalation magnetically attractive but potently deadly. Heated minds pictured animals sinking beneath it, stupefied from its wonderful fragrance; the fatal orchid reaching down its green tentacles and from the narcotized brute sucking out blood; the beast dying, sleeping beautifully, while a soft flush suffused the velvety orchid vampire. On a white man, fable had it, the exquisite odor was as mortally effective.

It was all legend, all hearsay. No white man ever had seen the Trevor Orchid or, seeing, had lived to tell the tale. I was supposed to achieve this impossibility. More; I was supposed to obtain possession of the Trevor Orchid. Some One wanted it. The House ordered me to get it. The House would accept only my death as an excuse for failure.

That was why I took Burke as *mein Kamerad.* Not only because the dark places of earth are hard upon a man by himself, but more because with two of us the chances were greater that the order of the House would be accomplished. Were I killed, Burke would remain to finish my work or himself die in the try.

I met Burke in Malay Muk's low whisky-breathing grog-shop on the wharves of the wind-churned Banjar opposite the little Dutch chapel in Banjermasin. I had just received my orders for the Trevor Orchid and had not then started any preparations for the journey. He was some years younger than I, a tall wiry sapling of man. But his keen haughty features, blunted and battered by dissipation, his hollow cheeks, darkly puff-ringed eyes and a nervous twitch of lips and lids gave him an appearance years older.

He had been beach-combing on the rat-walked sands of the South Pacific since the day, three years gone, when he had been cashiered for card-cheating from a crack Irish regiment stationed at Mainkhwon in the Patkoi Mountains of Upper Burma.

And now, after I had made something of a man of him, he had robbed me of himself, his companionship, the guide, the duffel—everything that made for my strength; leaving me all alone to shift for myself for the Trevor Orchid or rot to death in the attempt in that dank bosque of evilness.

CHAPTER II

THE SUNLESS NOON

NEXT day I pushed on up the rotting runway, alone, alone; and the next and the next. The steamy night of the fourth day found the smoke of wood-fires hanging heavy in the misty air and drying my throat and nostrils. I knew a village was near, a *barrio* of the Kapoeas Dyaks. At that, it may have been a great way above me; the smoky odor from the fires of days prior. For not the ghost of a burning breeze shriveled through that bosque of decay. There was no rustle, no movement, no sound; only stale, close, downbearing black stillness.

I could feel the pulse gushing into my ears as all night by the fire I sat and hearkened and stared with distended pupils into the inky black growths. About midnight on the tightened drums of my ears impinged a weird medley of sounds. War-conchs wildly bellowed, drums beat hollowly to a one-two time, bamboo flutes and whistles shrieked hideously and there was the incessant brassy clash of cymbals. It trickled down to me out of the lush-tangle like the muffled uproar of damned souls in a ghoulish carousal.

I had camped plump in the middle of a small level space in the sunken runway. I would have left had I known of a better place in which to hide. If I made down the mountains, I would only have to retrace my steps. I had to go on to get the orchid. I banked the fire with black muck and hid outstretched in the tall lush near it, trying to still my limbs, which were trembling as with ague.

The sounds soon died away and then came oppressive stillness, without the whispering flutter of a breeze, as though the

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very jungle were holding its breath in face of the next happening. The night ebbed ghostly on.

My lids fluttered open to eye the black lush, then closed and lay still; fluttered and lay still for longer and longer moments. And then they distended painfully wide. I was like a sleeper in a strange bedroom, sensing a presence in the unknown dark. The sound came again. I was afoot. I longed to shoot, to spit a flame of lead into the abysmal blackness. I knocked aside the smother of muck with one vicious kick and the fire shot hot sparks up into the breathless air.

He jumped down to the level space out of the blackness of lush and came half dashing, half pitching forward; a rounded figure of man clad, or better draped, in khaki rags.

"Burke!" I whistled through my teeth.

For the moment, with the shock, my brains refused to work. Then awful hatred of the man sloughed over me. My mind whirled with loathing and terrible anger. My leveled automat trembled.

"You —— scoundrel!" I yelled. "Look out!"

He lifted his head from between his huddled shoulders and I gazed through a veil of fire-smoke at a face that was to haunt my mind for years thereafter.

It was twisted with fear, horrible groveling fear. The whole area was shot a sickly yellow and the whites of his eyeballs were sprayed with spots of blood. One finger pressed deep across lips that curled upward and sagged flabbily down to the cleft in his beard-smutted chin. Yet his teeth were not exposed, as the lips were monstrously swollen. They were blistered a vein-blue.

It was hideous.

"Ssh!" he sibilated, and I remember I wondered at the moment that he could utter a sound with those terrible lips.

He glanced slyly like a monkey backward over his sagging shoulder, then bounded a step nearer me and the fire.

"I've seen it," he half whispered. "I've seen it. It's up there among the mountains and the long, long ladders. They're after me. It's after me."

Quietly I put my pistol back in my hip pocket and pulled forth a canteen of raw trade-gin. The man's condition had sapped me of all vindictive fury. I could hardly realize he was the same Burke who had so rankly deserted me four days before.

In those four days he appeared to have aged twenty years, from a tall wiry man to the bent and huddled figure of an old man. In four days!

"What's that?" he shot out. "Are you his wife? Is she your kin?"

He half cocked his head up at me. I realized then I had been saying softly, "*Mein Gott! Mein Gott!*" over and over again to myself.

But I answered, "Take this," handing over the canteen, "and take your time."

He tipped the tin into his mouth. I recollect that I wondered at the time that the sting of alcohol did not burn those blue lips. But, gulping with prodigious noise like a horse at a trough, he sank down beneath it beside the fire. I had unscrewed the cap for him, as he was trembling like the stamen of a pollen-shooting orchid in every limb despite the close heat. A month gone, in Malay Muk's down in Banjermasin, I had seen his frame shaken by the selfsame trembling spasms. Only it was awful fear this time, not drink.

"Tell me about it," I said.

I drew the half-emptied flask from those ghastly lips, screwed on the cover, sat down on the other side of the fire and, with what calmness I could summon, raked the coals with a strip of dead wood.

I did not want him to think I was forcing him. He was like a man wasted from drink. The slightest doubtful action would cause him to distrust me. Once before, in Malay Muk's, I had of necessity handled Burke in this manner. I steadied my eyes upon the pupils of his. It was a struggle not to note the blood-spots.

"After you left me, you and the guide," I said very slowly, "you turned off from the runway. Do you remember that? The runway, you and the guide, after you left me."

"The runway, me and the—the—— Who was that you said?"

"The guide, man; the guide."

"THE guide. Of course I remember him. I took him by his sweating shoulders and I hurled him from that shelf in the chasm that was no broader than the back of my hand. Over and over he pitched, and I waited and waited, and then I saw him hit. Head first he went, and the guide—he wanted my head. Ha, ha!

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My head, my poor old head that they burned to make me tell the truth—me who was the King of Spades and cashiered because I owned the army——"

"You left me in the runway," I insisted with a shudder. My eyes had dropped, momentarily, to his working swollen lips. "You and the guide. And you went up into the mountains. You and the guide without me. I shouted. Remember?"

He waved a hand in his domineering way.

"Don't distract me," he said. "We heard you shouting behind us, me and the guide, but we never stopped.... I never stopped once I left that stinking dobo. I ran and ran . . . At noon next day we came to a level patch that was clear save for three ripening banana-trees and the tall wild cogon. In one corner stood a small grass hut open on all sides and before it, crouched on his hams, was a naked Kapoeas with long white hair who was feeding moldy wood to a fire. His hair was whitened with wood-ashes and his face was streaked black with charcoal and he was ornamented with shell and seed and bead bracelets and armlets. He was after his marriage-head."

At the risk of throwing him out of train, I interposed, "A marriage-head. What's that? How did you know it?"

"How did I know what? Why do you distract me? Oh, the marriage-head," at my repetition of the question. "Oh, I only guessed it. You see he was alone and in warlike array far below his village. And a young man can not marry among some of the Dyaks like the Silakan, the Ukits and other tribes, until he has brought his bride elect a human head. I thought it was the same among the Kapoeas. Now don't distract me again."

I remembered thereat that once when I penetrated on an order of the House the uplands of Luzon for cocobolo or ironwood-trees to be used on account of its unique density for non-magnetic gears, I had encountered Ilongotes and found that this custom held with them.

"We crept through the cogon, the guide and I," said Burke, "very slowly and very silently. But the Dyak's keen ears warned him and he leaped afoot, long *sumpitan* in hand, arrow inserted, tube in mouth. He blew and the poisoned dart quivered into the body of the guide who was before me. I sprang with the fall of the guide's body, so ere he could blow another I had gripped him by the knees and together we rolled over and over on top of the smoking fire. . . But there were a dozen of them and they sat on me and I could not move or——"

"Take another jolt," I said slowly, passing him the uncovered canteen. Then after a moment, as I reached for the canteen, I hazarded:

"You overpowered the Kapoeas, you remember, in the clearing."

"Yes, I overpowered him," he went on. "I disarmed him with one jerk of *sumpitan* and arrows, then sprang to my feet and watched him crawl afoot through the sight of my Colt's. The guide was dead, the flesh all swollen and blue about the poisoned arrow where it had entered his heart. I wouldn't let him take the guide's head. Not though he begged me. He wanted it for his marriage-head, he said. So I promised him my head. You know how they prize a white man's head. I promised him my head if he would show me the Trevor Orchid. But he was the one that lost his head there in that narrow shelf on the mountainside. I did not want him to fall and break the rungs, so I pitched him over the topmost one and watched him shoot down——"

"How did you get to that shelf in the mountainside?"

"It was up by a ladder. No; it wasn't a ladder. It was a chasm, a cleft, and it squeezed my soul out of me so I could kill him. It was miles deep and we came out, next morning, at the very bottom of it. It was only wide enough for me to square my shoulders in it, not more than thirty inches, and it shot straight up that way for miles. They were just two slippery straight black walls, without a break, without vestige of shelf or ledge, save where a vein bulged out far, far up on the right-hand wall.

"There was no sun, though it was nigh noon, and it was damply dark, though far above I could see some crystal stars breathing in that inch of heaven. The wind shrieked in hurricane gusts about my knees and I feared it might toss me up, up between that vein and the opposite wall and that the vein would pulse and swell an inch and I would be caught in the vise and held screaming and kicking and clawing with my feet the miles of void beneath me. I squared my shoulders and braced my feet and elbows against either wall, to keep from shoot-

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ing up and to keep those tilting walls from squeezing me to a jelly.

"The Kapoeas flitted back to me over the shale that bestrewed the bottom. Before him I could not show fear or he might get courage to overcome me and claim my head without showing me the orchid. I knew if I once glimpsed the vampire I would get it. I wanted it. You don't know how I wanted it. Not for itself. I owe the money-lenders, and my father has disowned me, and that would pay and show them all in one, everybody.

"I shriveled into the center of the abysmal gash and my hands trembled to go above my head to protect me from those closing walls.. Then the cold winds whistled us over the humpbacked rocks along the bottom, but did not dry the chill damp of my body. I did not look up again till the Kapoeas stopped and pointed above."

He paused as I dropped my eyes from his to rake up the coals of the fire. I laid some dead wood upon it. The chill part of the night was on us and the air was choked with mist and clammy damp.

I felt Burke begin to tremble again. I attributed it to the cold. When I looked up again, I saw it was the Fear. It was in his blood-spotted eyes. I reached over and gripped his hand to steady him.

That was a shock. His hand was criss-crossed with cuts like striped flank-steak, and monstrously swollen as with blisters. It was cold as a corpse, and the fingers twitched continually, like the icy wet fins of a fish floundering about on dry land.

"You were in the bottom of the abyss," I reminded him with a shudder, "and you looked up when the Kapoeas pointed."

"WHO said I was there?" he whined. "There was a man there called Burke. That wasn't his real name, but I'll tell you about him. From the topmost rung Burke pitched that Kapoeas slap into the cold depths below. He killed the man, did Burke.

"There was a ladder going up the terrible trench. It was of rungs of bilian extending crosswise from holes in each slippery wall. Two feet apart they were and they spanned that narrow howling space almost perpendicularly right up to that snake clinging far far above to the right-hand wall. Burke, he had seen these selfsame devil's ladders in the shrieking crevices of the Patkoi Mountains of Burma and in the deep troughs of the Himalayas near the Khaibar Ghat.

"So Burke, he went up first. That other party, the tattooed Kapoeas, was afraid to trust Burke behind him. And Burke was afraid of those screaming depths. Often Burke clung to the rungs of ironwood and panted like a winded carabao and felt his knees turn to reeds when he needed them most. He clawed to the rungs so tightly he tore his nails, Burke did, and it sickened him as the blood dropped down through space, dropped and dropped without a sound.

"He closed his eyes and he felt his stomach churn and his brains whirl and shoot hot sparks against his clenched lids. Gusts of wind would scream through the devilish slit and strike his face like the drab hand of death and he would hold on and feel himself sway, and he prayed at those times, did Burke (though he hadn't prayed since the boys had laughed at him at Westward Ho) that the rungs and the holes would not give.

"Presently Burke began to sweat in the heat-waves the colder air at the bottom had shoved up to the top. Then his hand found no more rungs above him. He clutched at empty air and went reeling dizzy. After a while he slyly opened his eyes (which was Burke's way), and he found that he was holding to the topmost rung and that the shelf was on a level with his eyes and that it was no broader than the flat of a ruler.

"Burke clawed his weight on the shelf and lay face-down and his limbs were paralyzed by the fear that gripped him. Then the fingers of the Kapoeas clutched his clothes and, in clambering up, pulled and pulled at him. Burke thought he was dragging him off to hurl him to the bottom. He forgot all his fears, Burke did. He should have known that the Kapoeas wanted his head, and his head would be like crushed strawberries if ever he tumbled to that black bottom.

"But Burke couldn't think for himself, and that was not Burke's way. He clawed to his knees and he grabbed that poor Kapoeas by the shoulders and his fingers slipped on the sweaty skin. But he pressed the savage's head down, down over the topmost rung till he lost his equilibrium and went over, turning and twisting and twisting and turning round and round head first for miles!"

Mein Kamerad paused and looked fear-

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fully up at me and then, of a sudden, his ghastly lips screwed into a smile pitiable with weakness and hideous to look upon. The weight of the brutal confession off his soul, the poor fellow seemed childishly happy at having some one in-the-know.

"When I came to I was crawling up that shelf on hands and knees. Even then I was afraid to stand erect. The shelf was throbbing and tilting and I felt I was bellying over the dusty back of a huge rock-snake that was rippling along the slippery wall. All the while that infernal trench was gathering hot gusts of wind and slapping them under me like warmly moist hands to make me let go. But I just clawed into the rock waste and wormed along.

"The shelf sloped gently upward, and the slit above it ran harshly down in a try to reach and stop me, but I was after the Trevor Orchid and nothing could stop me. Even my laughter did not frighten me, as once it would, when the devilish trough sucked it down and presently flung it up again monstrously magnified. But the ease with which the moonbeams slithered like twisting snakes adown the slippery walls set my teeth to chattering and I locked together the lids of my eyes against the horrid fascination.

"In my blind crawl, I rubbed hard against the mountainside and of a startling suddenness I felt it drop away to nothingness. I flung myself prostrate and dug my fingers into the rock waste. The shelf seemed seized with a terrific spasm and gyrated dizzily and turned and tilted me up and down and topsyturvy in the void. I felt inverted, as though I were clinging, like a fly on the ceiling, to the shelf above me. Terrible horror levered my lids open and I found I was reeling dizzy and that the shelf had topped the apex of the fissure and that I was lying on the edge of that huge sword-gash and, on the other hand, of a village in a vast cleared space of jungle.

CHAPTER III

THE BROWN WOMAN OF THE CLINGING FEET

"THE clearing was fully an acre in extent," Burke went on, "and was surrounded save on the side where I lay by a rude fence of bamboo. Within this fence at the higher edge was the *dobo*. I knew it was a *dobo* because it was built upon four posts and was smaller than the other houses and because its entrance was barred with the vines and red blossoms of the blood-creeper. The other huts, of which there were eleven, extended from either side of the *dobo* round in a semicircle to the gap and were raised on stilts and were built very large, for the housing of several families under one roof. All were dark.

"Between them in the center of the clearing was a huge patch of cultivated field encircled completely by a second and even stouter fence. Here waved some leprous white poppies and I even could see in the brightness of moonlight the incisions made in the capsules of the plants for extracting opium-juice.

"I leaped afoot, darted across the lighted space and flung myself down beside the fence in the welcome shadow of the opium-poppies. I began crawling rapidly forward toward the *dobo* at the higher edge. But my hands and knees had become distinct pains and felt like soft juicy red-hot blisters. Often I paused and sat up or lay flat in order to relieve them, my automat sweeping the dark houses fearfully each time. Even when I crawled I held the Colt's clenched in my bruised right hand.

"I sat up opposite the bamboo ladder of the third house from the gap and then it was that I glimpsed between the edges and cracks of the rude bamboo door a flickering yellow light.

"I felt something snap in my head quite plainly and quite plainly for some reason I saw the meaning of that light. As sure as I was that I was sitting before that house, just so sure was I that that house was the dwelling of the fiancée of my Kapoeas. And the light was burning beside her couch, I was as sure, to warn all other suitors away.

"How did I know? Well, you know a Dyak, besides the ordinary attentions he pays the woman he desires to make his wife, is allowed by a peculiar custom to enter the girl's apartment at night between nine and ten o'clock when the family is fast asleep and converse with her on arrangements for the future, over a plentiful supply of sirrah-leaf and betel-nut, which he provides.

"Should the girl, on hearing who it is, say in Dyak, 'Blow up the fire,' the young buck beats a hasty retreat, for that is the customary form of dismissal. Hence, to keep a light burning beside the couch of an

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unmarried woman dismisses all suitors ere they start, and betokens that the man she desires has left the village, and this usually for his hideous marriage-dowry.

"After all, I thought, could the orchid be in the *dobo* that slept so quietly in the moonlight? Every time I had heard of the vampire, I had heard in the same breath that it was sacredly guarded. Might it not be in the *dobo* of the head-village? That cunning Kapoeas had not mentioned the location of the orchid-*dobo*. I resolved to have this brown woman help me. How, I knew not, but I was after the Trevor Orchid, remember, and you never heard of a white man who saw that, did you?

"I GOT afoot and strode boldly across the moon-washed space to the ladder and up its seven rungs to the rough open paddy-platform. The whole bamboo affair creaked and trembled under my booted feet as no native of Borneo had the combined weight and energy to make it tremble and creak. But I knew that in boldness lay the jack-pot or my head, and I slipped back the bamboo bolt through the latch-hole in the bamboo door and then slithered back that rude contraption.

"The light was a darting pin-head and came from the top of the long straight bamboo tube that was stepped in the floor just without the dirty mosquito-curtains at the far end of the long room. Walls of bark and leaves partitioned off the apartments of families. All opened into the six-foot-wide passage that ran from the low doorway to the netting of the end apartment. Down the center of that corridor, I counted seven hearths, one for each pair of apartments and every two families.

"The place was sweaty and stale and suffocating with the smoldering heat from the banked fires and the small amount of fetid air for so many sleepers. I stood and sweated as the regular respiration of all those natives crept to my ears.

"There on the yielding bamboo floor of the entrance I sat down and removed my boots. I placed one stockinged foot and then another before it along that undulating flooring. The noise was terrific. The elastic slats slipped down and up beneath my feet with frightful long, long screams. I got down and I crept. My hands and knees cried aloud with agony. Then I lay flat and wriggled my whole body like a snake past those fires.

"I was making no sound, now, for once again I caught the monotonous respiration of those sleepers, as when I had stood still. But I could not see them, on account of the coarse native curtains which trailed on stout bamboo rods from partition to partition and banked the passage with dirty white.

"I sprawled at last beneath that long tube with its burning flame. I listened. I heard that one-two breathing. I raised myself to my knees and, chancing all, I blew. The air burned through my lips like the wail of the hot monsoon and that flutter of flame rocked and rocked and I feared it would never die and that I would be heard. I shrilled the last ounce of breath in my lungs full blast at it and, like a gossamer of down, it seemed to float away through the netting and all was dark—darkness that breathed with methodical rise and fall.

"There came a hasty *klecking* as the curtains on the bamboo rod were drawn aside. I could see nothing. How many times that breathing rose slowly and then fell while I cast about for words, I do not know. I felt a hot flush trickle down over me.

" '*Salamat*,' I whispered, which was the first thing that came to my mental relief and which is Malay for, 'Peace be unto you.' Then I saw my mistake. It was not Dyak. She would not understand it. The strange sound of the vocables would frighten her. She would scream! I lost my head. I leaned over and, in despair at making myself understood, I kissed her!

"The very audacity of my desperate greeting stilled any outcry she would have made. She gasped chokingly and there was a sudden rustling as back into the leaf-plaited mats of the couch she slumped.

"Now was my time. Forthwith I told her of the bargain I had made with her betrothed. She was to show me the Trevor Orchid and then he was to get my head as his marriage-dowry. He was below in the deep slit (and the Kapoeas certainly was) to guard against my escaping! But I wouldn't escape. No; nor attempt to. All I wanted was a look at the vampire-orchid. One little glimpse at that wonderful bit of fungus and the desire that cankered my heart would be soothed, assuaged. I would be only too glad to give her my head. Oh, I laid it on thick, I tell you, and

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I don't know if I told her all, such was my haste and trepidation, but what I did tell her I sure spiced with flavorings.

" 'Blow up the light,' came soft as a purr in Dyak through the dark.

"It was the formula of dismissal. It was according to custom. It bereft me of thought, of action, of life. The progress of my brains stopped dead as a drill when it hits a vugg in a lode. And then I felt her soft hands fingering my ears and my numbed head was drawn down and two lips pressed velvety as orchids and as sweet against mine!

" 'The fire,' she whispered.

"At that, I understood. She wanted to show me she was my friend. She believed what I had said. She would show me the vampire-orchids and one sight I knew would make it mine. In a fleeting instant her kiss expressed to me all this, her whole stand. I felt she had some need for that light. Perhaps to decoy the other natives into believing that she still slumbered behind the curtains. I raked out a coal from the nearest banked fire and touched it to the resin oozing from the top of the tube. I found the brown woman beside me, clad in a short petticoat *sarong* of pandanus.

" 'COME,' said she and, without sound, she wilted to her knees and with one snaky flexure, like a swimmer striking out into water, went outstretched flat on her stomach on the floor. Her spine stood out from her back like a knotty bamboo and the ribs showed from each hard swelling of bone like the panicled sprouts from the joints of the bamboo-stalk. Along her back-bone a ripple would creep and rise up and slip down over the bony knobs and creep to the next and rise and fall again; and the ribs would seem to be shoving the brown skin of her back down toward her *sarong*. The only way I could tell she was moving was by seeing the space separating me from her rigid feet slowly and soundlessly increase. It was like the flow of a snake. She seemed just to ooze along. I hope I never may see another crawl like that woman's.

"By the time I reached the doorway, the brown woman was awaiting me at the foot of the ladder. Quickly I slid the rude door to on its bamboo rollers, and stepped across the squeaking platform and down the ladder.

"There, with her before me, I sat down on the bottom rung of the ladder to draw on the boots. In so doing, my eyes alighted quite naturally on her bare brown toes half submerged in the loose silt. In all my life I never had seen human feet like hers! I pictured her, for the short space of a moment, clinging to tree-tops and running up straight slippery blank walls.

"They were like an ape's, just like an ape's. The toes were long and the three outer ones actually were turned toward the inner two. Just like an orang-utan, I tell you. And they dug, those feelers of toes, clingingly into the mushy soil of the slope. I dropped the boots. I could not help it. From then on that woman could never be anything more to me than a brown savage. I never could stomach those terrible toes.

"Then I got afoot and thereat she started down the clearing toward the gap stretching like a long black bari-snake into the far reaches of that wash of moonlight. I had given no vent to my abhorrence at sight of her feet, other than the dropping of the boots, so I certainly was able to control my surprise at this turning of our backs on the *dobo* of the village. I just placed all my unreasoning confidence in her and strode even boldly through the silt.

"It may have been the change from the stifling closeness of the long house, but for some reason, at the brink of the hideous crack, I drew back and went shivering all over. And then, then it was that she took me by the hand and she reached up, the little midget, got clear on the tips of her monkey-toes and she kissed me.

"For the second time, so she did. She meant right. She wanted to show me that she was leading me down the infernal abyss because that shelf in it would lead to the *dobo* of the vampire-orchid. At that, she must have liked this custom of the white man (it was the second time, mark me), or else in her own simple way she was in love with me.

"So I got a grip on myself and together and upright we started down that shelf, sidling along with hands moistly clasped, she leading me and our jowls, for the sake in the dark of preserving our balance, feathering the beady wall. We went on and on and down and down and for long moments it was a twice-told affair to me; until the winds carried up through the inky void the

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dismal wailings of her Kapoeas on the rocks far far below.

" 'He's down there, he's down there, far far down there!' I said, just like that. I knew we were sidling by that long devil's ladder.

"She shouted and her shouts, they sounded like 'Hoo-hah! hoo-hah!' and it was the war-cry of the head-hunting Dyak that slips through interminable distances of breezeless jungle. The gap and the hollow bowl of night, they just shook with her yells.

" 'Don't! He'll hear you!' I whispered in Dyak.

"That was silly to say and should have told her quite plainly that I had killed him. Not a word did she utter, though; just clung to my hand and dragged me on and on. She must have loved me, that brown woman.

"THE slit opened and widened and twisted this way and that. The winds grew bitter cold and shrieking, shrieking. The shelf itself, it would sweep and sweep around huge bends or deep incisions and again break so sharply at turns as to bring us slap up against the wall or almost off the winding brink. Then it would run straight on and down and down and on for what seemed miles, and I was so glad there was not even a will-o'-the-wisp of light to show out the vast spaces and that shelf shooting like a steel rail always ahead.

"We walked and worked like crabs along that sheer wall. I could see only the black figure of the brown woman creeping sidewise ahead like a monstrous black fly. And all the time the cuts in my knees were bleeding profusely. At each movement, the blood warmed in ticklish gushes down my legs and soaked into the heels of my socks and slapped flabbily under my instep.

"Whether from this or the sickly uncertainty of being poised in tangible dark on a ribbon of shelf, my stomach felt like a howling hollow cave and my limbs were faltering and my brains were reeling round for all the world as though some one was stirring them in the brainpan of my head.

"I realize now that I was in the last stages of exhaustion. When we banged slap against a bend of wall, I could not help it, but slid down on the shelf. I almost dragged the woman by her hand off into the abyss, but she leaned over and allowed her arm to follow my descent like fishing-line paid off a reel.

"I sank back and lay, as dormant as a crocodile on a mud-bank, flat on that strip of shelf, and gazed up through the blackness at the pin-points of crystal far far above in that thread of peacock-blue. And oh, how I longed for a bit of tenacious brush in which I might lock my fingers and, secure in the knowledge that I could not slip off, sink to sleep and forget all, everything, even the orchid!

"The next thing I remember was the intoning of a most mournful kind of chant. It was a regular torrent of words going to one single high note. Once before, years gone, had I heard it. It was at Fort Alfred in British North Borneo, when an old, old head-hunter had been brought in and had sung in this way, thinking he was about to lose his own leathery old head, as a death-song. Of the heads he had taken he had sung and then, as now, it had gripped me with a morbid obsession. I worked my hands along my side and lifted myself to a sitting posture.

"The brown woman was at my feet, her naked back against the wall, her short legs dangling over the brink of the shelf into the nothingness that was black and the words cascading in a terrible treble of sing-song from her working lips. I listened. She was praying—praying to her *Antus*, which might be ghosts or spirits or even gods. In that one high tone, she called on the *Antus* of the jungle, of the mountains, of the *sungei*, of the gap, of the animals, of the winds and at that last she turned her face to the four points of the compass.

"And then the meaning of it all seeped into my brains and with a leaping of heart, I understood. The *Antu* that governed the four winds and the *tembadu* and the gap and the rivers and the mountains and the abysmal *rhuk* was the vampire-orchid. She was praying to the orchid!

"MY NERVES jumped through my body as though they were the strings of an instrument and she playing upon them. In the monotonous tolling of the *Antus*, I could hear the tramp of all the hundreds and thousands of my fellow men that had hunted the wonderful sprig of fungus and never had found it—tramping, tramping, tramping through that black bog of gap. Beneath the winking

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eyes of that hideous blue, over the top of the slit, shot and galloped and tumbled helter-skelter like whirligigs into the depths all the overloaded expeditions and brave little parties and insane lone adventurers that had wallowed bosque and lush and *rhuk* and had rotted of disease, like rats been butchered, or in the hundreds of horrible ways known to head-hunters and sentient jungles, had suffered and wasted and died for it.

"She chanted over the names of departed chiefs of the Kapoeas, the *Antu* of the great white man—and the sable frieze of the years was drawn aside and I saw Trevor and his faithful Malays sinking through the haze of warm mist into the sucking mud of the *totong*. I saw all the Kapoeas and the naked Kapoeas guarding day on day, decade by decade, as a superstitious secret, that frail fungoid flower.

"It was intoxicating. That rosary worked on my brains like hot sun on pitch in the seams of ships. My imagination bubbled. I saw head-hunters as they prayed to it in sickness and as they prayed to it in famine, and I saw them in times of plenty kotowing before it with hideous sacrifices of smoke-cured human heads.

"I know that terrible litany filled me with unreasoning desire. I was mad with desire. A glimpse alone of that flower, I felt, would satisfy me. I was not hypocritical. I meant it. I felt it. In every fiber of my being I felt it. I actually thirsted for a glint of that flower. The desire seemed to bite into my entrails like a rotting fever. I wanted, dearly wanted, to see this work of nature that these people called God.

"I clawed up that wall to my knees and that chant went on, and in time to it my heart throbbed till I thought it must trip over its own beats. I was on my feet to the palate-striking monotone of the *Antu* that glowed by night and waggled by day.

"Half fainting, I reeled against her. She took my hand.

" 'Hoo-hah!' she cried and dragged me on, on, on.

"A damp on my face, clammy as the feel of a dead man's hand, brought me to further realization, how long later I do not know. I was swathed in a mist choking as fog. I rubbed my jowls and my free hand flat against the smooth wet wall and looked ahead. I saw a monstrous milk-white cobra sleek over the top of the wall, which was not far above though we had been going down all along. He kept slipping, slipping over the brink and down the abyss; and his hooded head, so far down I could not see it, hissed like the boom of a mighty mortar.

" 'It's the waterfall,' I heard the brown woman say.

"Instantly fear of being washed off the shelf caused me to stop dead in my tracks. She stopped with me and for a moment all I could see was that cataract hurling mighty phalanxes of thick cream over the brink of the gap. A ledge of iron rock jutted out above from the wall and clear of the shelf and from it that avalanche of water bent and churned in a thick white jet straight down into the dizzy depths.

"Now that I saw it fell clear of the path, I was nothing loath to be dragged on. It was black as jungle beneath it. It looked, from the underside, like a solid heavy black pall. Not a drop of damp fell on me. Only the continual dull roaring 'boom-boom!' from leagues below told me the water was falling, falling from all about me.

"All of the brown woman, save the little hand grasping mine, had disappeared through a large oblong hole in the wall directly beneath the center of that tumult of water. I shoved through and found my half-clad feet sinking into slush that was the collection of a century. The stuff sucked like so many hungry mouths and actually creeped thickly over my feet and as, in shivering horror, I snapped upright, the top of my head grazed some smoke-cured skulls dangling from the roof of the cavern. I went reeling sick, with my stomach striking my throat.

CHAPTER IV

THE VAMPIRE-ORCHID

"THE cavern was hollowed out of the rock wall to the size of a fair room. A long narrow gash of moonlight showed a second opening at the far end and, silhouetted against it, was an old man tending a slow-smoking fire. He was the fire-tender, an old old man with brown skin that hung in wrinkles and folds like raw leather to his shriveled body. His humped back, half turned toward me, was draped over with thick dirty and long gray strands of hair. He never looked round; only with

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palsied hands placed dead and moldy wood upon the fire and witlessly watched it glow and smoke.

"The roof and walls were littered and hung with immense brass gongs and jars of age and skulls grinning grotesquely. There was a cleared space in the center of the right-hand wall where was a lamp, a long bamboo tube in which twelve smaller tubes were bracketed in a circle. Behind this, in a niche, waggling continually like the *Desmodium gyrans* of the Indies and glowing in the light like a beating heart, was the most wonderful orchid ever I looked upon.

"I could feel my own heart begin to pound madly at the sight and my senses seemed no longer a part of me.

"The weird bloom was indescribable. I can not say exactly what was its shape or color, though it seemed mostly a bleeding red, with corolla thick as wax and formed like a dove. It was like no species of [illegible] I ever had seen or heard of. It

No longer did I marvel that the Kapoeas called it God.

"So—so.

"The brown woman's hand on my arm stopped me. I had reached for the orchid. I shook her off. My fingers were twitching to embrace that flower. I reached out my two hands and, as they closed about the gaping white jaws to lift it up from the base, a cold iciness chilled from the tips of my fingers up through my arms. It congealed five deep through every tendon of me and I went shaking as though it had been with ague.

"And then I felt that brown woman's hand tight as a talon about my right arm. Exactly what happened next I do not well remember. But a fierce temper seemed to burn me and madly I swung my arm backward to shake her off. Turning with the blow, I found I had smote her to a cringing heap in the slush.

"I tell you, sight of that flower bleeding in the light had driven me insane. I felt [illegible] leaping, worn shoes and all, upon her [illegible]ead. What I did do was to burst [illegible] her in a wild tirade of words. [illegible]n low, for fear the old fire-[illegible]ar me, but that little alle-[illegible]ss, the wild, utter, unrea-[illegible] their meaning. For I [illegible]erfered, to kill her—to [illegible]trawberries as I had

[illegible]ent, no sound. I [illegible]cket of lights and [illegible]ger shivery at its

[illegible]ire-orchid, which [illegible]een! And then [illegible]t my trousers-

[illegible]*utu* now. [illegible]. They [illegible]hey will [illegible]he indi- which [illegible]—'is [illegible]*he*

"THEREAT she turned and led without more ado through the slush to the opposite wall of the cave. Here, where it was darker, I beheld as I drew near a stout trunk of bilian raised a foot off the black slime on low posts. It was carved crudely with a myriad of grotesque animals and birds and reptiles. The top of it disappeared into the low ceiling of the cavern. Four feet above the slush between the gaping jaws of a carved human-skulled crocodile were two rude rattan hinges that seemed to permit of a flap's being raised. This the woman, without a word, lifted, and there in the base of the tree, which was completely hollowed out, I saw a litter of blackened skulls.

" 'In there?' I drew back.

"She nodded without looking at me.

" 'It is a taboo. They never will think to look for you there. I will come and tell you when all is well.' And she waited in silence.

"Head first I shoved myself through that two-foot scuttle and, as I got to my feet inside, I could hear the skulls crunching under me. It was shivery. She let fall the flap. I heard the slither into place of a wooden bolt and then I could hear nothing save, when I moved, the sickly crunching under foot of those skulls.

"It was pitchy dark in the hollow tree, but when I looked upward I could see far above in a disk of peacock-blue a myriad of breathing stars. The taboo, some fifteen feet up, gave out on the top of the mountain. At the sight a longing rose within me to have the orchid in my hands that I might clamber out of the trunk without disturbing the old fire-tender or encountering the priests. Then I saw that the interior of the trunk was too wide to permit of me bracing my feet from side to side, and too smooth to furnish a hand- or foothold.

"I sat me down then, content to wait and leave all in the hands of the brown woman. I felt supremely confident that she loved me, and I was happy in the belief that all this while she was abiding her time to help me. I remember now my only fear was that my disclosure might be brought about by a sudden tropical rain which would turn my taboo into a well and flood me out into the cave. Of a certainty, had I any inkling of the trend events really were taking, I would not have fallen asleep, as I did, through sheer exhaustion.

"When I awoke, I was at a loss for a dreadful minute where I was. It was light, redly light, in the hollow, and an unearthly din was shattering my ears. I looked up. A bloody red disk like a spot of blood lay just above me over the top of the trunk and from it rose those hideous sounds.

" 'The Kapoeas!' was my instant thought. I slumped even deeper into the litter of skulls away from it and threw my arm protectingly above my head and listened fearfully to the detonating din and the chattering of my own teeth.

"But it was the moon, a furtive glance from beneath my arm showed me; a round ball of red hung suspended in a motionless dye-blue sky. Thereat I knew I had slept from moon to moon. It took only a second thought to isolate the medley of weird sounds. They certainly seemed to come from out the night and were commingled booming drums and clashing cymbals and whistling flutes and brazen war-conchs. They were growing louder and thicker and nearer. At last they seemed to come from right above me.

"FOR the first time—the very first time, will you believe me?—I began to suspect treachery on the part of the brown woman. In no other wise could I account for all that deafening racket. I got to my worn-shod feet. I began kicking at the flap of bilian. It gave not an inch. In utter dismay, I kicked again and kicked and kicked. The only result was the painful stubbing of my toes and the sudden surcease of the din.

"An ominous quietude prevailed. I sweated copiously. Then I saw the flap pressed against. I heard the upraised slither of the bolt. Slowly, up, up, the flap was lifted by unseen hands. I did not move.

"Ruddy light swept through the orifice. I caught the constant crack-crackle! of a roaring fire. But I did not move. All was deathly still, save for the noise of the fire and my own husky breathing. Even this last abated somewhat as I recognized in the hands plucking at my trousers the brass-bangled arms of the brown woman.

" '*Baik;* good. All is well,' came her whisper.

"So I thrust one foot through the hole and then the other. Right at that I felt them grasped. Every inch of the exposed limbs seemed suddenly to be seized by

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crushing fingers. I shivered. With terrible fear I shivered all over and made frantically to draw back. At that, out through the two-foot scuttle with breath-taking quickness bodily I was jerked.

"I slapped full length into the slush. A ton of matter seemed to fall on me. It was a burden of warm bodies, the bodies of men, the bodies of grotesquely decorated and charcoaled brown men—priests!

"I had a falling glimpse of the brown woman facing me in the ruddy light; facing me with a hideous leer on her hair-enmeshed face. And about her waist was a single narrow strip of pehang. She was in mourning!

"She had betrayed me.

"Beneath all that crushing weight I could hear her in the native jabber screeching her terrible denunciations. I was after the great *Antu*. I had killed her fiancé for it and to it I had forced her to lead me. I was to see it and she was to get my head. So I had said. I had lied. I had tried to steal it and not give her my head. I had threatened to kill her. She who already was as good as dead. Where only medicine-men and warriors could come, she had entered. She had sinned. She had defiled by her womanly presence this holy cave. *Ohé!* Because of all this, because her fiancé was dead and she had sinned, she was going to join him.

"I heard the light quick tread of running feet, a wild cry, a splash. I knew she had thrown herself through the oblong entrance into the cold torrent of water and was falling, falling in the midst of it down to the echoing depths, to the deep dark cold depths where lay her Kapoeas. . . . Where lay her——"

"Here, Burke," I said, "take some of this."

I handed him the last bit of gin I had. The night had turned bitingly chill. Mist was tight as a cloak about us. The fire had sunk to a smolder of glowing coals and gave out but little warmth. I gripped him afresh by his torn hand.

"What did they do? The priests, I mean," at his blank stare.

"Oh, the priests. The place was full of them; men like apes, short and squat and huge-limbed. They were streaked hideously with charcoal. Their long hair, whitened with wood-ashes, flowed over their shoulders and was tied with fillets out of which glinted their black pin-points of eyes. All were armed with hand-darts and these, to drive me near the fire, they stuck into my skin.

"Here was an old snake of a man. An old, old priest with crisp black beard and an inner fold to the eyelid—wickedly double-lidded, just like a snake's. He reached down and by a bilian handle drew out a long red-hot iron.

"Look at my mouth, my teeth, my lips! They sank my lips and teeth into that flaming iron. They did. It drove me crazy. I snapped up under all those knives and grabbed at it with my hands. Yes, with my bare cut hands. I was mad with awful pain. I swung it about me.

"Screams broke out from all sides. Screams of pain as I burned this devil with the end of it, then seared another with the whole flat of it. It was hell broken loose. From all sides they leaped back.

"I picked up the skull bearing the orchid. I jumped toward the ragged slit that gave out on the tabooed cemetery. Here, as I dodged through, with all my strength I hurled that blazing rod back into the press of priests. Then, amid the horrifying howls of agony, I turned and ran and ran and ran, with only the *Antu* of the brown woman brave enough to dodge among the dark graves after me.

"You've heard of the skull of Sir Hugh Trevor with its vampire-orchid; the great *Antu* of the Kapoeas. Well, here it is!"

And out from among his rags, Burke pulled just that—a hideous gaping white skull with a tiny black gash in the right temple from which on a vivid green stem drooped a death-wax blossom in the perfect form of a dove, and in hue such a strikingly bleeding red that it seemed to drip blood.

CHAPTER V

HEAD-HUNTERS AND THE SILENCE

I NOTICED that it nodded from *mein Kamerad* to me and seemed to stretch and extend toward us, as its pollen-shooting brethren does toward bees and birds, as though with its sentient faculties it sensed our presence.

"This belongs to the House, Burke," I said quietly.

He looked up. He had been watching the flower as though hypnotized by it. A blank spiritless expression was in his blood-

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speckled eyes. They looked like the rolling optics of a negro.

"The who?"

"The House. The Hamburgische Gesellschaft."

"Don't know him," he shook his head. "But I do know it belongs to me. Just as my head does to that brown woman and her Kapoeas. To me and the moneylenders. Will you give my vampire back to them? The little brown woman that loved me, that loved me——"

And he rocked his body back and forth.

I was terribly angry. That's so. I'll be candid with you. That flower had begun to work on me, on my starved and tattered nerves. I tell you, we had been too long, *mein Kamerad* and I, altogether too long in that *rhuk* of black solitude. Now I too felt the intense longing for that fatal orchid. I can't account for it. But I really think its subtle perfume caused the brains to lose staid reasoning power. I reached over to take the flower, whether Burke would have it or not. A sibilant whisper from the creature halted me dead.

"They're right behind you!"

He was staring wildly with distended eyes beyond me.

"The Kapoeas and his woman. Oh, those eyes, those eyes!"

He threw his arm before his face and hurled himself flat on it on the black earth of the runway.

I cast a fearful glance into the enveloping lush. Nothing was there to cause my heart to still; just inky tendrils and black giant trees and pitchy ferns. In all that waste of jungle there was no sound save the drip-drip of gathered mist from the foliage.

I looked with a smile down at the prone form of Burke. The fire was smoldering at his tattered feet. Near his head was that alluring orchid with its uncanny white skull. Should I grab up the flower and run for it? No; I could not desert *mein Kamerad*, half crazed as he was. The head-hunters would surely get him. Even then they might be searching for him. I shot a glance about me. The shadows were slipping nearer. *Nein*, I shuddered; no, I could not leave Burke alone in that dismal bosque.

I lay down on the other side of the coals, with the orchid between us, and closed my lids. It was better than eying the black growths. But I could not keep them shut. I was obsessed by thought. Had not Burke basely deserted me? something inside my head kept asking me. I sat up and reached for the Orchid; then stopped dead, doubly amazed. Burke upraised like a jack-in-the-box. My eyes were glued to the orchid. So were his.

The flower was waggling frantically.

Would you believe it; that frail blossom was gyrating swimmingly in a circle, reaching out and extending with great effort, nodding and bending as though excited. It was for all the world as if it sensed, as a Hindu does a cobra, unknown presences in the dripping dark. Like two parts of a deadened machine, we watched it.

All was black and unearthly quiet about us save the drip now and then from the leaves. I felt the damp like cold hands. I heard the bark of a plandok to its mate and I knew out in the world it was sunup. Then somewhere in the black lush, close at hand, as if under the paw of a prowling ape, a twig snapped. Right on the back of it, a stone dislodged from the banking side of the runway bounded through the lush into the level space near the fire.

I leaped afoot. My blood was tingling with fear. Of a sudden, the black reaches seemed vague with life. Call it instinct if you will, but for some reason I had a vision of short, squat, heavily-muscled brown men squatting naked, without shiver, in the miasmatic mist. I saw an inky fern sway where the others were still.

I leapt forward and spat a flame of lead into it. From it, as I did, whizzed a something that fell into and scattered the coals of the fire to all sides.

It was the slender dart of a *sumpitan*.

"Burke!" I yelled. "The Kapoeas! Head-hunters! They're after us! They're all about us! Break for it, man! Run!"

I picked up the electrified flower. I leaped from the scattered fire down the lush-tangled runway that I had pursued all day. With the action I plunged into complete blackness—blackness that was blind and cold. Oh, so cold!

I could hear Burke crying behind me. He wanted the orchid. He could not wait till we got to safety. Whimpering like a child, he was calling for it. How I cursed him for his racket as I broke through that tangled lattice-work of trees and lush and creepers! And then I tripped over a coil of creepers and slid down down through the wet lush.

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Burke was whimpering softly over the flower ere I could get to my feet. I let him have it. Then in the inky dark we ran down and down. The crackle of breaking twigs, the thudding of durian oranges from overhead, the bending and tightening of trees and creepers where others close at hand were still, all grew more pronounced. The ape-like head-hunters were closing in on us. I felt their presences as a Venus's fly-trap does an insect's.

We burst out upon a limestone-flat, clear for a space of vegetation. Here the day was reflected with intense grayness, and beyond the runway dropped down, down to the clearing above Pitch Lake. I caught a wild cry from Burke ahead. I saw him turn. I thought the head-hunters were beyond. Then he was beside me.

"It's asleep! It's closed up!" he was shrieking madly. "The air, it's cold! It's killing it! It's drooping, dying! My orchid is dying, dying——"

The rest was lost behind me in the fastnesses of jungle. Burke had disappeared back up the runway, the very way he had come.

He had turned back to save the precious plant, to attain warmer air, that it might live. I looked back, stupefied, paralyzed. There was a monstrous rustling of the inky growths above. I heard a single shriek. A shriek of agony, I thought. Then on top of it came, just as he had described, a wild outlandish, "Hoo-hah!"

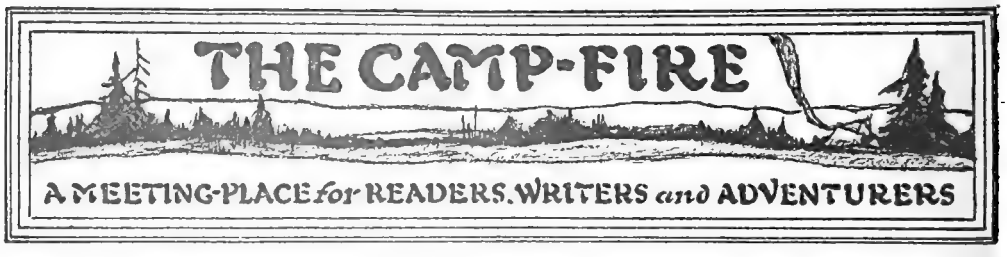
I turned and ran or fell, I don't know which.

THAT shriek may have been *mein Kamerad's*. All I know is that I came to a consciousness of what I was doing as the broad clearing and familiar boma and fire ashes and headless skeleton broke out in moonlight before my eyes. I had run in a daze without halt or sight since I had left that tragic limestone-flat. I still was crazed with fear, the unmanning fear of the unseen. I raced for the river where we had hid the *gobang;* brushed aside the heap of parasitical growths; caught the splash of a disturbed crocodile and, fearful of what it was, leaped helter-skelter into the canoe and shoved clear of the bank into the swirl of the river.

Looking backward, I could see the jungle rising green and still above me, vivid green save where a pinch of white limestone gleamed and glistened like a diamond in the moonlight, and all deathly still.

There was no sound in all that waste of overgrown space excepting the *flap-flap* of the choppy waves against the sides of my empty canoe and the splatter of the unseen crocodile as he crawled lazily back on his mud-bank.

I was alone, alone on the swirling Barito.



PROBABLY only a comparative few of you know Borneo from personal experience, so that of the large remainder there may be some inclined to think that Patrick Casey has drawn on his imagination far more than the plot itself in "The Orchid of Allure."

Seven years ago he shipped out of San Francisco, his native place, as a cabin-boy on "a liner which shall be nameless, as I jumped the ship at Hongkong." Then he traveled the South Seas and the Far East in general with a theatrical troupe. Then served under the Government at Manila. Then a year as quartermaster on the Borneo Limited Company's steamships that run between Kuching, Sarawak and Singapore. That, and what appears in his letter that

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follows, are only samples from his wanderings, but the rest we'll save for another time. There are more stories of his to come.

The character of Trevor is drawn from Sir Hugh Low who was one of Rajah Brooke's right-hand men in Sarawak, but first of all was an orchid-hunter. His father, a horticulturist himself, secured his appointment with the East India Company, but on the way out Low threw over the appointment and "sarawaked" with Sir James. Far into the jungle highlands he penetrated on the business of Brooke, holding levees and giving presents and talk and, sometimes, bullets. All the while his eyes were open and his hands grasping for kopo-kopo-utan. Low was an Englishman of Clapton stock. If you want to know where I got the naturalizing element, I drew that from the late painter, Alma-Tadema who, as I remember it, was a naturalized Belgian. Thusly have I drawn threads of remembrance and stories together to make my finished whole. Unlike Trevor of the "Orchid," Low died from natural causes years after he had changed from a hunter to the more prosaic pursuit of a breeder of orchids.

THE following from a Singapore newspaper to show how heads are prized among the Dyaks:

Sibau Modang was a Tring Dyak who had been persuaded by the padres (missionaries) to give up the barbaric custom of head-hunting. He fell in love with a Dyak maiden. The girl, although returning his passion, disdained his offer of marriage because he no longer indulged in the ancient practise of cutting off and bringing home the heads of the enemies of the tribe.

"Go dress like a woman!" she said. "You no longer have the courage of a man."

Goaded by the taunts, Sibau left the village. When he returned, he entered his sweetheart's hut carrying a sack on his shoulder. He opened it and four human heads rolled upon the bamboo flooring.

The girl flung her arms round his neck and embraced him. But he put her off.

"You wanted heads," he said. "I have brought them. They are the heads of your father, your mother, your brother and Het Quin, my rival."

Forthwith, Sibau Modang was seized by the tribesmen. He was placed in a small bamboo structure such as is commonly used for pigs. There he was confined in punishment until he starved to death.

No explanation was ever made as to how the disappearance of father and mother and brother and rival was not noted till the young man disclosed his hideous offerings. But it is a true story, I read the account of it myself!

THE character of Hoffrahm is drawn from a composite of all those queer sentimental itinerant Dutch and Germans who wander up and down the outer *campongs* of civilization at the beck and call of Amsterdam and Hamburg. As a rule, they are quiet, wordless characters, but do a favor for them, help them out in their slaving business in some slight way and they will open up their homesick hearts to you and you will find that they have lived stories outlandish and fanciful and some, as life will have it, too tragic to be written.

Bourke is a man of the beach. A white man, a cool dicer spun forth from the Foochow Road, a gin-drinking remittance man. His spine is growing flexible and fishy with tropic heat and indolence, at the time Hoffrahm takes hold of him. He has been living on the gin-pahits you buy him and in a little while will reach the "mat" stage, and after that—well, he will no longer be a white man. You'll find the graves of him and his kind, marked and unmarked, on the stark beaches of many a South Sea isle. Nameless are three such graves of Englishmen on the beach of the Chinese *campong* of Samarinda, Borneo. Back home, some one proud and unyielding to the last, has found that the remittances are no longer called for at Banjermasin or Macassar or Pago Pago.

"THE Orchid of Allure" is just a mass of tales and customs and scenes that have come either to my ears or eyes. In the story itself is explained where I saw gaps like the one I describe—in the Patkoi Mountains of Burma and the Himalayas near the Khaiber Pass. I have seen others far in the interior of Borneo in the prodigally vegetated uplands. There are some in Mexico, even, and the Andes of South America. In fact, you'll find them wherever the mountains are high and the process of formation still working havoc.

The description of the brown woman's feet is drawn from the Orang-Utan, that huge ape with no hair on its palms, just like a man. Also, from the pygmy Sakais of Batang-Padang on the Malay Peninsula. The prehensile feet of these aborigines admit of their clambering up and bounding from tree-top to tree-top and balancing with burdens of cooking-materials and children on spidery aerial bridges of ropes of rattan spun between spaced trunks.

Throughout the story I have tried to state offhand where I got the basis for each incident. Like the sing-song of the woman. I really was present at Fort Alfred when that old head-hunter was brought in. The sensation Bourke experiences at the sound of the single high shrilling note is my description of just what I felt at the time.

THE actual description of the shape of the orchid is drawn from such an one as I saw in my wanderings on the Mahakkam River. It was withered and it draggled in the stifling heat. From far off it looked like some bird's nest as it clung to a huge banyan tree. But when I drew near, its weird form left an indelible impression on my mind. The only color I felt could really bring out that dove shape was a most brilliant bleeding red.

The impressions the orchid causes on Bourke are the impressions these terrible travesties have made on myself and other men. The loss of breath, the subtle perfume, even the sentient faculty of sucking the life-blood from man or animal—all these views have a basis either in tales or still stranger fact.

Imagine it! To break through an interlaced lattice-work of green that sweats, where the very birds are noiseless. To see some distance ahead, on a dripping leaf or fiber-like creeper or bit of moss or prong-pointed fern, what appears to be both a butterfly and a poisonous scorpion, poised motionless in the dank twilight. Its eyes are black rings and gaping straight at yours. Its bill is long and pointed and thread-like. It seems awaiting the proper moment to flitter on you and sting. And this

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is an Orchid. A Dendrobium fasciculatum, a Coelogyne Lowii or a Crispum. It's all a matter of color and form and mottlings and discoverer.

L. WARBURTON, who wrote the article on the Jameson Raid, has wandered over most of the earth since he left his native Australia. Since I've known him—by correspondence—he has covered a good deal of the Southwest and Canada and a letter from him the other day bore the Kingston, Jamaica, postmark and announced that he was on his way to England as a way-station to probable wanderings in South America.

HERE'S a bit out of an old letter to me from S. B. H. Hurst, who has a tale in this number. The bit doesn't deal with the sea, on which Mr. Hurst has spent most of his life, but is interesting nevertheless:

——— was the only really intimate friend I ever had. We shared everything, and slept under the same blanket. Last time I saw him was on a certain wharf after we had lost all our money. He was to get a laboring job at three dollars next day, and I was waiting to slip on a certain steamer to get to a northern port—taking a chance, without a cent. He begged me not to go—had a hunch we would never meet again if I did, and as he was not given to that sort of talk, I ought to have stayed with him, but I didn't. He had two dollars and ten cents, and we had a beer each, and then he insisted on my taking one of the dollars.

He was the finest-looking man, and the best I ever knew. Shortly after, he was attacked by an ex-deputy-sheriff in Goldfield, the reason not being known. It appears that they went into a clinch (there were no witnesses) and that ——— played with him. In some way, the other got out a gun (——— was unarmed) and shot him through the kidneys. One report is that he died in the arms of the dance-hall girl, and the other that he laughed at the fellow, and dropped. The killer got a prison term.

If I had not left him on the wharf, he would have been alive now, as it must have taken some time for the other to get the gun out, and he could have easily been stopped. But I did not take his hunch.

IT'S been some time since I've heard from Leonard Matters, who wrote "In the China Trade" and other stories of Black Morton. The last time I saw him he was sailing from New York for England and then Egypt and the Upper Nile. We kept in touch by letter for a while, but—well I must hunt him up and find out what has been happening to him.

Black Morton, of course, is a fiction character based on the notorious Bully Hayes. You may remember that some time ago I asked for any facts that would clear up the mystery hanging over the ultimate fate of Hayes. I got them. From various men scattered all over the world who had either themselves known the famous South Seas skipper or had reliable data at second-hand. Among others Louis Becke, who sailed with Hayes and was undoubtedly the best authority on the man. Shortly after I received his account of Hayes' ending I read in a New York paper the notice of Mr. Becke's own death in Australia, his native land. That was in March or April of this year.

Yes, we have the facts now, and as soon as I can get time I'll collect them into shape for your reading. It's gratifying to know that among us of the Camp-Fire we've cleared up, once and for all, at least one of the mysteries of the world of adventure. A little longer and it would have been too late.

THERE is no better agency than the Camp-Fire members for clearing up things of this kind. Now for the next mystery on our list—General Sir Hector Macdonald. Another coil of conflicting rumors and reports. Was he really, after all, in the coffin sent home for burial? Or is he still alive, a soldier of fortune under some other name? *Was* he a general of the Chinese army after his "death"? *Was* he one of the Japanese generals in the war with Russia?

Yesterday I had a letter from a man, once a prisoner of Macdonald's in the Boer War, who states simply and flatly that he has met him personally since his "death," but to-day, much to my chagrin, came a second letter asking that none of the first one appear in print. Perhaps he will relent and let me give it to you later. Meanwhile, how about the rest of you? Are there any more of you who can testify that the famous British general is still alive?

ALGOT LANGE sends me the following from Para. There is in it some information and advice that may be of interest to some of our fellows of the Camp-Fire.

I received a few days ago three copies of the ADVENTURE MAGAZINE, and let me tell you, it was like a friendly breeze from the States.

I have just returned from the Moju River, where I was making certain preliminary studies, and expect to go up there again in a couple of days on a more serious expedition to investigate not only the natural resources of this very interesting river but also the life conditions of a Tupy tribe. I have

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come in contact with certain members of this tribe who spoke but little Portuguese, and I was invited in the name of the chief to come up to the *maloca* (tribal hut) above the waterfalls and spend a couple of weeks.

I have established my headquarters here in Para and have my wife situated in a nice little home to which I always return after finishing some exploration in the bush.

I am in the service of the Federal Government of Brazil and find my work extremely interesting as it is essentially the same as I planned for the U. of P. expedition. I am traveling around with a complete outfit for my observations, as well as a cinematographic outfit to depict the many interesting phases of the Amazonian life.

AS A special agent of this Government I have been given special facilities and carte blanche to the Interior and will thus be able to come out of the swamp in eight to ten months' time with some good material both for publication and lecturing purposes. I expect to be home in the States on leave of absence around Xmas or New Year's, and provided it does not get me first, I will bring the snake that has caused my friends home so many sleepless nights.

You might state in your next number (machine not writing very well) my affiliation with the department of the "Protecçao aos Indios," or Indian affairs, of the States of Para and Amazonas. It might also interest you to know that the Brazilian Government has recently enforced its new law protecting the native tribes of the Amazon basin from the foreign invasions. It will also interest you to know that there are actually more native tribes hidden in the backwoods than I expected, but the different back-rivers where these tribes live are practically governed by private wealthy individuals whose word is law beyond any arguments. It is thus psychologically more important to bring presents to these gentlemen than to the poor Indian, and these individuals (bosses) do not feel complimented by any little tokens of your esteem, provided their value is much below one to two hundred dollars. Thereby your welcome is assured and your exit not hurried.

THESE are advices to prospective adventurers who may want to "explore" the Amazon, like "Amazon Charlie," and should not be ignored. In fact, the aspect of the chances for adventurers has changed considerably since I was on the Amazon last time. The Brazilians are wary and suspicious, for which I don't blame them—they have been done too often lately. There are too many "wise" persons here in Para and Manaos to let anything that smells too strongly of illegitimate enterprises pass up the old Amazon.

We would be glad to see serious investigators come down to the river. Men with capital, good sense and desire to work with their hands, plus a capital of rugged health, instead of men who are packing guns. This latter is more needed in New York than on the Amazon. It is the man behind the pick and ax that we need here, and the only one that is really welcome. Shooting Indians is out of fashion, so to speak, and rather dangerous, not on account of the Indians themselves, but because of the people behind them. In studying the resources and their utilization one will meet with enough excitement to satisfy even the most blasé hero.

My future publications, I expect, will contain a greater wealth of observations and deductions than was the case with my first one. Occurrences of temporary interest are but of secondary importance (they always are here in life).

The forests interest me as much as ever before, in fact more, because I am beginning to read their contents just as a child begins to grasp the ABC and, the more I study, the more I find that I lack in knowledge about this stupendous treasure of natural wealth, yet to be explored and analyzed.

As long as I keep the fire in my pipe going, and the boots on my feet there will be news from me.

Sincerely yours, ALGOT LANGE.
Inspectoria Protecçao aos Indios,
Para, Brazil.

GEORGE ROTHWELL BROWN, who gives us our article on the earliest buccaneers of the Spanish Main, is on the staff of the Washington *Post*. It is his first appearance in ADVENTURE, and he responds with some hesitation to the usual call to come forward and introduce himself to the Camp-Fire circle:

I suppose I have a newspaper man's horror of publicity except the publicity of his victims. As a matter of fact there hasn't been a great deal of adventure in my life. Twelve or thirteen years ago I did some punching of the casual cow, as my friend Al. Lewis would say, and was around some of the Panhandle ranches and I have been about some of the New Mexico and Colorado and Wyoming mines a bit, and have even fancied I was some sort of a prospector myself, although with indifferent success. I have cruised a little on the South Atlantic coast, in fact, I usually spend my vacation on some old schooner out of Norfolk or Beaufort, N. C. I have done some big-game hunting in Jackson Hole and have some pretty good trophies, but the older I grow—I am just past thirty—the more I dislike to kill things. I never shot an animal without feeling sorry for it and without resolving that I wouldn't take the life of a wild creature again. However, I am sorry to say, my good resolutions invariably went crumbling on the very next hunting trip.

THE Chicago *Tribune* published the following June 5th. All you who are adventurously inclined, join in a welcome to the Adventurers' Club baby. The Chicago chapter hasn't asked for any advice or suggestions, but doubtless they'll be ready for some by the time this meets your eye.

I wonder what they'll name it. And its education and training? If that youngster isn't able to break his milk-bottles in the air with an automatic at the age of two; if he hasn't led a polar expedition by the time he is eight, killed big game in Africa and been through at least two Mexican

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revolutions before he is twelve, well, the Chicago club will have to be investigated.

I guess we'll all sort of have to take an interest in that baby.

DEATH DEFIERS ADOPT BABY

ADVENTURERS AT PRESS CLUB INDORSE PLAN BY COMERFORD

SOME SHRINK AT HAZARD

OTHER HEROES BRAVELY FACE "BOTTLE CRY IN THE NIGHT"

The Adventurers' club is about to have an adventure. It proposes to adopt a two weeks' old boy of nameless parentage.

Frank Comerford, in addressing a meeting of the Adventurers, who rally at the Press club, outlined the situation to the other members. Three weeks ago, he said, a wealthy woman living on the north side gave birth to a child, which died a few hours later.

The mother's condition was such that her physician ordered her to accept another child to nurse for a few weeks. He obtained a baby from an orphan's home and had it brought to the residence, but the youngster did not like his new surroundings and proved unsatisfactory, to the amazement of the family, the physician, and the large corps of servants.

"BOOTED AWAY A KINGDOM"

"THINK of it," said Mr. Comerford with a wave of his hands. "That boy had a kingdom in his grasp and booted it away."

As a result the youngster was shipped to the Lake View hospital for temporary care until he should be returned to the asylum.

"Now, here's the point," said Mr. Comerford. "Are you adventurers going to let a baby with an adventurous spirit like that go back to an asylum?"

"No!" shouted Baron von Tauber of Austria, who is passing through Chicago preparatory to a South African trip and was elected an Adventurer on the strength of that program.

"Now, wait a minute," said another death-defying Adventurer, "I'm a hardy, reckless party all right, but there is one risk that I will not take."

STIRS BARON'S INDIGNATION

"COWARD!" cried the baron. "You're no adventurer."

"You can talk," said another worried member—the boy scout of the Canadian Rockies. "You're going to Africa. I'd rather associate with lions than with babies at the squalling age. No bottle-cry in the night for me."

The other adventurers overpowered the objector and voted to adopt the baby if they could silence the opposition of the Press club members, led by Director M. S. Watson, who had announced their intention to make it a Press club baby. A committee was named to arrange a parley, and also to devise a plan for naming the child and starting an endowment to provide for his care and education and start in life.

A LINE here from George Vaux Bacon, whose "Great Chewing-Gum Boycott" is in this issue:

My experience has been one which is commonplace enough to any one acquainted with the life of a newspaper man or a worker in the mills, in both of which stunts I guess I struck most of the adventures I have ever met with. Of course, I have been in a railroad wreck, and a riot or so, and all that sort of thing, including an East Indian running amuck with a magazine rifle on Clark Street one Summer in Chicago, which was interesting, but in which I was certainly not alone.

I am really starting in on the adventures of my life, I guess. So far, they have been on the streets of Middle Western cities in all kinds of circumstances which to the stay-at-home I suppose would be adventuresome, but which you know are not out of the ordinary to any one who is a sort of wanderer by nature.

I noticed in some of your earlier numbers that you had the story of a boy of about nineteen who was in the Balkan troubles, and saw active service there. I feel jealous of him. Here I am five years older than he, and I haven't even been in a battle yet! Some people are born lucky, it seems.

I will make a confession. Asia, and particularly India, has always had a deep fascination for me, and I have read and thought and dreamed and listened to stories about it till I almost feel as though I had myself lived through and experienced many of the things I heard. If the gods are good to me, I shall be there some day.

INQUIRIES and applications continue to come in concerning the Adventurers' Club. Neither this magazine nor any other has any connection with the club, nor any say in its affairs. Such information concerning it as has been given in the "Camp-Fire" has been given merely because in the nature of things the club is of interest to all who have felt the call of the Wanderlust and therefore particularly to the readers of this magazine. Also, though I am merely one of its many members, I am personally much interested in the club and am glad to do what I can toward making known its existence and character to all who are eligible and would enjoy it as much as the rest of us do.

To answer inquiries in the most satisfactory way I have recently drawn up a full statement of the club's aims, rules, etc., explaining how to make application for membership or for a charter for a new chapter of four or more members, and giving the names and addresses of the secretaries of existing chapters, of men organizing chapters in new places, and of applicants where no chapter is as yet under way. This will be sent to any one for the asking.

By the way, if you chance to see a man

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wearing a small, neat black rosette with a one-eighth section of red in it, you will know that he is a member of some chapter of the Adventurers' Club.

NOW the Camp-Fire is an entirely different matter. It is not a definite organization, has no rules, no requirements for membership except the wish to belong. Merely a crowd of us that come together every month to talk a little and listen to what this, that, or the other member happens to have to say about the things that interest us. Readers, writers and editors meet here on common ground for no other reason than that we want to. Here we get acquainted and here we get news from every far corner of the present-day world of adventure. If we've had adventures we tell about them when the spirit moves us. If we haven't, we merely listen. But all of us belong to the circle about this imaginary camp-fire of ours and there is always a seat for any one whatsoever who cares to spend a few minutes with us or to sit with us regularly. If he has in him the spirit of adventure, no matter if he's never had even the ghost of an adventure himself, he is welcome.

IT HAS been quite a while since we had a story from George C. Hull, who for some time past has been making Honolulu his base of operations, said operations not being bounded by the city limits. Hence "King Rehoboam" in this issue. A word from Mr. Hull himself:

The work of a newspaper man in a large city, as you probably know, carries with it much which would seem adventure to an outsider but which to them is but a part of the day's work. I have had the not unusual career of a police reporter, who has hunted a Japanese murderer through the Rocky Mountains in an automobile at midnight and who on one occasion helped a lone policeman arrest and disarm two highwaymen and afterward stood guard over a room full of safe-blowers while the policeman went for help.

As a boy, or rather youth, I attended school in East Tennessee where I spent my Summers in the Smoky Mountains among the moonshiners, a country where the law of the "settlements" does not run. On one occasion I was made a deputy sheriff in order that the sheriff could have subpœnas served in a country in which he dared not go. I have ridden with the revenue officer against the moonshiners, and have been with the latter when the revenue officers called.

Although born in India I came to America when a boy and consequently my recollections of that country have to be refreshed by my immediate relatives.

AFTER leaving school in 1898, at the age of twenty, I enlisted in the Colorado Volunteers. Took part in the fighting before Manila and in the capture of the city, on which occasion my blouse was creased by a Mauser bullet. Afterward I served six months in campaigning against the insurgents; was at the battle of Caloocan with the Kansans, this being the only real battle in which the opposing forces were in battle strength. Took part in several other skirmishes which were warm while they lasted.

On leaving the army I visited Japan where I had the experience of being chased by a mob in the native city of Tokio without knowing the reason for the chase.

I have made my home in the West since 1898, and in my newspaper career have met many strange characters, most of whom I have taken pains to cultivate.

A SMALL riot follows. The first letter came signed as below, and though for several months I've run a paragraph in "Lost Trails" asking the writer to give me his full name and address so that I can reach him by mail, there has been no response. It is hardly what you'd call an anonymous letter, but I'd have liked it better if Mr. Williams and I had been given a chance to reply direct.

I sent the letter to Mr. Williams and his reply is given here.

We always want the real facts of a case. Can any of you add anything in this matter?

Having just read your May number, I wish to enter a protest against the story of the battle of Tia Juana, written by Fred Williams. As I was 1st Sergeant of A Troop, and as A Troop was the left flank, I object to his statement that we broke first.

Further, I quote him as follows, "There were wounded men, clutching at their fleeing comrades, beseeching them not to leave them to the mercy of the Mexican rurales." This is not true. The Captain of C Troop carried the only wounded C Troop man the four miles to the boundary line, and further. I with Williams' bunkie, by name of Johnson, were among the last to come over the hill, out of range of the Mexicans, and I had only seen two of A Troop wounded: first, Friend, who had his toes shot off, but hobbled to the line unassisted, and second, Morgan, who was hit in the abdomen with a dumdum, and certainly died very shortly.

IF WILLIAMS carried a wounded man, I would venture to ask the name that man was known by in the troop. I distinctly remember Williams surrendering with A Troop, of which I was in command at the time, at three in the afternoon, and as we were almost immediately transported to Fort Rosecrans, I should like to know what night he buried his "dead comrade."

If his article was intended for fiction, I beg to apologize for this letter, but if it were meant for an authentic statement, I wish to register howls of protest against his version of the scrap. Apparently his memory is very much distorted, or else he has

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drawn on his imagination to fill in parts of the fight, which he did not see, owing to early departure from the fracas. "ELLIOT," 1st Sergeant A Troop.

P. S.—He says in his letter to the Camp-Fire that, "The description of this retreat, and the pleadings of the wounded that they be carried away to escape massacre has never been printed before." Well, I shouldn't wonder that it hasn't, but I am indeed sorry to see ADVENTURE print it first.

Here is Mr. Williams' reply:

IN REGARD to Elliot's letter. If he didn't see what I saw on that battlefield, why, I am sorry. He missed the experience of his life-time. He either departed from the field too soon or was blind to the facts in the case. Figures bear out my version of the scrap, in that 150 went out to the fight and only 93 came back. Not more than 7 were deserters. The rest were shot down and of those who fell but 10 were killed, 40 being wounded. We carried only a man or so away from the field, and the natural conclusion is that the wounded were massacred. The enemy took no prisoners, and U. S. Customs officials and immigration inspectors visiting the battlefield that night and the next day counted more than 50 white men dead. They were ours all right.

AS FAR as I am concerned I gave you a story based on facts. In scarcely an instance did I resort to embellishment, save where it is stated "I buried him in the night, where the soil was softer, etc." I met "Jim" all right, carried him as told in the story and when I fell and recovered I left him humped up in the brush out of sight. That was his burial. I didn't have time for a grave and it was daytime instead of night.

I do not wish to say this in a spirit of boastfulness, but there were seven men who were the last to leave the field and I was among the seven. Elliot was not among that seven. Mosby, Johnson, Webster, Stone and two others, whose names I do not recall, constituted the seven.

Elliot was not in command of troop A at the battle. Captain Stone was in command, and when we reached Fort Rosecrans Adjutant-General James Lafling took charge of our troop. He was formerly our "top" sergeant. I remember Elliot at Rosecrans but not on the battlefield.

FOR the benefit of any of you who may not have noticed our offer of identification-cards a brief explanation is again given. There was a reproduction of both sides of the card in last month's "Camp-Fire," showing the directions printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese. Cards are now ready for delivery, many already having been issued.

And please *note carefully the italics in what follows*. When you ask for a card but fail to give us the necessary data we naturally can't send you one.

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one friend, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. The names and addresses will be treated as confidential by us. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for purposes of business identification. Later arrangements may perhaps be made for money deposits to cover cable or telegraph notifications. Cards furnished free of charge, *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application. Send no applications without the two names and two addresses in full.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Later, for the cost of manufacture, we may furnish, instead of the above cards, a card or tag of aluminum, proof against heat, water and general wear and tear, for adventurers when actually in the jungle, desert, etc.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give the two names and addresses in full when applying.*

LAST month we had Arthur D. Howden Smith's account of the end of his own adventures with a Bulgarian *cheta* serving in irregular warfare against the Turks several years before the late Balkan war. Since then Mr. Smith has kept in particularly close touch with events and conditions in southeastern Europe and his letters that follow will show just how much real fact there is behind his fiction story in this number, "An Affair of Irregulars." You will remember that the Peter Mileff whom he makes his fictional hero in this story is the man who was in command of the *cheta* with which Mr. Smith served.

The story is founded on facts, but I have taken a good many liberties with those same facts. The incident upon which I based my idea for the story was the capture of Mahmed Javer Pasha's corps by the Bulgarian troops in the latter part of November, some weeks after the big fighting in the Fall campaign was completed. This corps, composed of wreckage from the Turkish army assembled for the defense of the frontier, of scattered corps and batteries from Mustapha Pasha, Kirk Kilisse and Central Macedonia, was wholly lost to view, so far as the outside world was concerned, until the Bulgarian General Staff in one of their calm, unemotional bulletins, announced its capture.

PREVIOUS to this, the Bulgarians had given the world to understand that they had cleaned out the Turks between the frontier and Tchatalja and that the only remaining body of the enemy was the garrison of Adrianople, then already effectually masked. But all this time the Bulgarians knew that Javer Pasha's corps was still existent, and that around it he was gathering every body of troops he could pick up, striving continuously to weld together another fighting-machine with which to

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start offensive tactics. As a matter of fact, he had accumulated more than 20,000 men before the Bulgarians had a chance to get after him.

When they did, however, they went for him with a will. Perhaps I should say that even before they could spare an army of regular troops to close in on this forlorn hope of the Turks, the Macedonian irregulars, *comitadjis* or *chetniks* as they are called, had been worrying Javer most effectually. Sandansky, Tchernerpaieff and other *chetnik* leaders—including, I believe, the veritable Peter Mileff who is the hero of my story, and whom, I see, you recognize as a former pal and chief of mine in bygone adventurous days—had conducted some masterly campaigns in miniature in the few weeks before this, in the course of which they had rounded up several bodies of Turks, after the manner I set forth in my story.

BUT to return to Javer. In a series of running fightings at Kirdjali, Gumuldzina, Deadeagatsch, Bedekli, Mastakli, Baghtaschlar, Fene and Merahamli in the valley on the right bank of the Maritza, the Bulgars hammered Javer's troops until they had them cornered in a confluence of another stream—the name of which I have forgotten—with the Maritza, and there, with most of his artillery already gone, he surrendered, with fifteen thousand men and a great depot of stores and railroad supplies, including a number of locomotives.

Now the thing that struck me most particularly about this incident, when I chanced upon it in studying over the story of the war, was the way in which the Bulgars had successfully concealed the existence of such a formidable army of their enemies, and then, without letting any one else dream that it existed, had systematically gone after it and everlastingly punished it until they had it exactly where they wanted it. I had already worked up a good deal of material concerning the really remarkable work done by the irregulars in Central Macedonia, and after tracing their connection with the capture of Javer Pasha, the idea occurred to me of combining the two incidents to make the story of an imaginary Turkish army that should sprout out of the wild defiles of Central Macedonia like the soldiers from the dragons' teeth in the old Greek myth.

AS A matter of fact, there were several lost Turkish armies in the course of the war, armies of men who were lost to view in the forest-covered, rugged country that constituted the theater of operations and who bobbed up again miles away from where they were last heard of, and started operations all over again. One of the latest of these occurrences—and one even more striking than that I described previously—was the recent surrender of a Turkish army corps commanded by Djavid Pasha to the Servians somewhere in Albania. This body of troops were lost to view for more than four months. Think of that! An army lost for four months, although all the time it was fighting and struggling with somebody.

Besides these two cases, there were any number of instances of regiments and garrisons of towns, cut off from all support, that either held out as long as they could, or else tried to cut their way through to where they supposed the main Turkish armies would be. I may have something more to write later about this phase of the war, and I certainly have not said my last word about the work of the Macedonian *chetniks*. The work they did on the left flank of the Bulgarian army at Lule Burgas in itself deserves to give them a comfortable niche in their country's history. Sandansky's seizure of the Rhodope passes several days before war was actually declared was another great feat.

By the way, the news has just come of the fall of Adrianople, and I am as pleased as punch. The Bulgars seem to have carried out the job in a thoroughly sporting way.

A later letter from Mr. Smith follows:

No, I'm correct about Javer and Djavid Pashas. They are two different persons and their commands were never identical. It is true as your clippings point out that, since I wrote you before, Djavid's surrender has been denied, although he is surrounded, I understand, and his formal yielding is only a matter of time. He has shown himself a very elusive person throughout the war, having been reported as a suicide after the battle of Kumanova, and said to have been captured at least half-a-dozen times.

There is a very interesting account of Javer Pasha's surrender in Wagner's book on the war. I had lost my English newspaper clippings concerning this incident and was obliged to turn to it for corroboration of details. . . . .

Enclosed is my previous letter. By the time you print it I am sure Djavid will be a prisoner.

P. S.—Lest you think I have c[illegible] carrying powers of modern gun-fire, i[illegible] that men who were in the Balkans l[illegible] that one could hear the cannon abou[illegible] a distance of one hundred miles [illegible] weather, and especially just about d[illegible]

AT A recent dinner of the Adventurers' Club of New York, Captain Fritz Duquesne, after a tribute to President Cabrara of Guatemala as the best ruler any Central American republic ever had, introduced as guest of honor Colonel Mario de Monteforte, President Cabrara's right-hand man—what we should call, I imagine, the Secretary of State—and said to be one of the ablest diplomatists in this hemisphere. Colonel de Monteforte addressed the Club in Spanish, stated his business in New York and then told them something about Guatemala:

"GENTLEMEN, I am highly honored by your invitation to this dinner, for I recognize that before me there are men from the four corners of the earth; men who have fought under all flags and lived under all governments, men who have made and unmade governments, with the pen and with the sword. I suppose that in no other place in the world was such a gathering of real doers of things ever gotten together under one roof. I know that were I to utter a false statement about the country I have the honor to represent, a dozen here would challenge my word.

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"IT IS fourteen years that we have had President Cabrara at the helm of state in Guatemala. During that time there has not been a death by wilful violence, fifteen hundred schools have been built, hospitals, a military school and colleges. There is an army of 20,000 well equipped men with a splendid field artillery, wireless corps, cavalry and infantry.

"As a proof of the stability of the Government, American capital to the extent of $200,000,000 has been invested. We have built railroads through the country connecting all the important points. The debts of the past administrations are being slowly cleared up. All our prosperity and good government is due to one man who rules with an iron hand in a velvet glove.

"I extend the welcome of a Guatemalan to you one and all, and should you ever visit my country my personal service will be at your disposal."

Colonel de Monteforte was unanimously elected to membership in the Aventurers' club.

CAPTAIN DUQUESNE is at present preparing for an expedition entering South America in French Guiana, penetrating the Amazon Valley to Iquitos and thence into the wilds of Matto Grosso, the practically unknown territory along the boundaries of Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. He is after moving pictures of native life and hunting—to be exhibited at the Panama Exposition in San Francisco—as well as scientific data. His cousin, the Vicomte de Rancougne (who is now in Paris making final arrangements with the French Government and incidentally organizing a Paris chapter of the Adventurers' Club) and Mrs. Duquesne will accompany him.

At Kingston, Jamaica, they will pick up eight negroes as a vanguard of machete men. There will also be eighteen half-breeds, some of whom were with Captain Duquesne in his expeditions into Colombia, Brazil and Costa Rica, and—a unique feature—a Great Dane that was trained in the Putumayo rubber country to give warning of the nearness of poisoned arrows and pits. As a protection against poisoned darts and mosquitoes, the three whites will wear, in imitation of the old Spanish conquistadores, partial armor of specially prepared leather. The dog and the armor at first glance may seem rather odd, but Captain Duquesne is not unfamiliar with South American conditions and, while not looking for trouble, is doing some independent thinking and making thorough preparation in advance.

I know you'll all join in wishing luck and "good hunting" to these two members of the Adventurers' Club of New York.

THIS same Boer member of the club and the Camp-Fire tells me that his scheme for introducing into the United States the hippopotamus, giraffe, llama, camel, African antelopes, Great Kori bustard, etc., is to come up before our next Congress. Sounds sort of funny, doesn't it? But I'm offering a prize to any one who can show it is really any funnier than it was to introduce into this country all those other foreign animals now so vital a factor in our civilization—horses, cows, sheep, pigs and goats.

For example, you from Louisiana, do you know what the hippo could do for your watercourses now choked with water hyacinths? Or what is his meat value compared to cattle? Or the value of his splendid leather for automobile covers and other purposes? Or its fat for cosmetics?

You of the southern Middle West, have you ever considered that partially wooded land used up by cattle leaves excellent grazing for the giraffe?

If the llama is invaluable in western South America as a beast of burden and for his hair, hide, etc., and would thrive in many parts of our own country, why on earth shouldn't we profit by him?

It's a big idea, this of Captain Duquesne's and not lightly to be turned down merely because we "never used to do it."

PLEASE note that our "Lost Trails" department (p. 2, continued on p. 224) has arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication, free of charge, in their well-known "Missing Relatives" column, daily and weekly editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. As the *Star* reaches every corner in the Dominion, this will materially increase the efficiency of the service offered.

SOMETIMES we're asked whether new writers have any chance with ADVENTURE. They certainly have. Some day I'll print a list of all those whose first story saw print in ADVENTURE. Some of our writers have appeared in other magazines —*Atlantic Monthly*, *Scribners*, *Everybody's*, and the rest. But some of our very best were "new writers" when they entered ADVENTURE.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

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WANTED —MEN *and* ADVENTURES

NOTE.—We offer this corner of the Camp-Fire, free of charge, to such of our readers as may care to avail themselves of it. Naturally we can not vouch for any of the letters, the writers thereof, or any of the claims set forth therein, beyond the fact that we receive and publish these letters in good faith. We reserve the privilege of not publishing any letters or part of a letter. Any inquiry for adventures or adventurers sent to this magazine will be considered as intended for publication, at our discretion, in this department, with all names and addresses given therein printed in full, unless such inquiry contains contrary instructions. In the latter case we reserve the right to substitute for real names any numbers or other names. We are ready to forward mail through this office, but assume no responsibility therefor.

ADVENTURE wanted. Have served in Uncle's Navy and had a little private scrap of my own with the "gu-gus" down in Manila over a cock-fight. I'll carry a souvenir of it to my grave and I had considerable trouble explaining to the first "luff" at "mast" next morning. After getting my ticket at Bremerton, Wash., I went to work in gravel-pits, logging-camps and R. R. camps around Tacoma and finally hoboed my way down to Frisco over the S. P. Rode the Shasta Limited out of Oregon City one evening in April, "decking" her just before she stopped, and held her down all night. Then laid over in the "jungles" until about noon when I caught a "time" freight, which I rode until about midnight. Then caught the Shasta again and rode the tops through the mountains. Some of those tunnels gave me——, too. September last "Frisco Pete" and I left Frisco for Indianapolis. Shipped to Sparks, Nev., as teamsters, worked a couple of weeks and got a stake, then bummed it to Indianapolis. Am a fairly good seaman, a good shot with almost any kind of a gun except machine- or shot-guns, with which I've had no experience. Can ride a horse, can use my head or my fists as the circumstances require, and have my fair share of nerve. Five feet five and a half, weight about 140, gray eyes and light brown hair.—Address No. 69.

CAN you put me in communication with some party that wants two young reliable men? My pardner is 6 feet 4 inches in height and my height is 6 feet. We are used to hardship and danger and willing to go anywhere in the world, providing it promises adventure and is not crooked.—Address K. D. THOMPSON, 604 W. 9th Street, Austin, Texas.

WOULD like to join some outfit going prospecting for adventure and gold or other precious substance. American, 29, two years' experience with canoe in Maine; trading store on Navajo Reservation; understand horses, automobiles, woods and desert. Have wanderlust bad for the trail of the "Golden Fleece."—Address No. 70.

AM WRITING you with the hope that I might be able to get in touch with some desirable enterprise at most anywhere in the world, where my experience and ability can be utilized and where I may be able to get suitable returns for it. You will see that, because of my position here, and because of a large acquaintance, I do not care to have my name published, but should you care to, you may state it, and what I am.

I am a physician and surgeon of 28 years; graduated from the University of Michigan four years ago, since which time I have had exceptionally fine experience in hospital, private and institutional work. Competent and able to land at almost anything of a medical or surgical nature. At present I have no desire to establish myself, and because of youth, health and lack of restraining influences, am in the most favorable position to go somewhere I have never been in before. Place undesirable to other men of skilled instinct and family ties would appeal to me, for I crave the unusual.

I am particularly desirous of going to South America, or almost any place which would furnish me new experience would fill the bill.—Address No. 66.

AM AN officer in the State militia of the United States, a sharpshooter with a rifle and an expert with a revolver. Am transit man with an engineering corps and have had four years' experience in civil engineering. Have lived for a long while in camps and am used to hardships. I also know something about the practise of medicine. Will go anywhere there is any prospect of adventure and will stick to anything I start. I have a college education and command a good salary here, but have an inborn love of adventure.—Address J. P. MCPHERSON, 1524 Silver Street, Jacksonville, Fla.

WANTED, several men inured to tropical climates, not afraid of stiff work in central Borneo. Can promise plenty of adventure. I want men who have seen hard service and can shoot straight, but do not want men over thirty. No capital required. —Address No. 71.

WANTED, to go to a tropical country with an exploration expedition. Preferably South America. Part of my record is: Philippines in '98, Honduras under Lee Christmas, Mexico under Madero. Crack shot with six-shooter and rifle, punched cattle, and have been packer, prospector and miner. Thirty-two years old; have lived all my life in the

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open, and don't drink. Have had command of men at different times when a cool head was just as necessary as gameness. Not a bulldozer, but can handle men. A fair salary is imperative, as my services are not for nothing. Can give references.—Address E. A. TALBERT, Hotel Golden Annex, Reno, Nevada.

HAVE an honorable discharge from six years' apprenticeship in the U. S. Navy, during which service I was on submarine boats nine months and auxiliary vessels the remainder of the time. Served one year in revenue cutter service, aboard the *Thetis;* eleven months in Canal Zone, service as dredge engineer. Three years' experience as railroad brakeman and conductor. Well acquainted with conditions in Central America, also west coast of South America. Further details, service letters and references can be furnished. Am an experienced deep-sea diver and a good marksman with any secondary-battery gun, including field-pieces. Have had common school education, I. C. S. supplementary course in steam engineering. Age 29 years. Have worked as structural iron-worker.—Address No. 80.

AM ENGLISH, born in Portsmouth, 26 years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, and weigh 165 pounds. Was destined for the English Civil Service and attended schools for that purpose, but the spirit of my forefathers asserted itself and I would have nothing to do with the life of a "pen pusher." Was apprenticed to the marine engineering trade but did not have sense to stay with it. After my two brothers came home from South Africa in 1902 covered, to my youthful mind, in glory, I decided I too would don the "Queen's Scarlet." Left home and enlisted in the 17th (D. C. O.) Lancers. Since then have served in the U. S. Cavalry, being in at the death of the ladrone Jihiri on the island of Pata near Jolo, P. I.

Was also in the R. N. W. M. P. stationed at Macleod and it was a corporal of our "D" division that captured the famous "Bill Miner," the bank robber, train hold-up man, etc. Have been a marine oiler, railroad fireman; was in and around Cobalt in 1906; worked in a gold mine; punched cows in Montana, and at the present time am running a donkey-engine in the woods. Can ride, shoot and swim well, and if there is any one who has need of my humble services in any adventure that promises a relief from the awful monotony of every-day life I shall be eternally obliged.—Address No. 87.

TWO young men aged 21 and 23 years want adventure. Are acquainted with gas-engines, autos, machine-guns. Have hoboed, punched cows, clerked. Speak Spanish fluently. No objection to going anywhere.—Address No. 82.

WOULD like an adventure. Have been a barber, engineer, cook, electrician, gas-engine man and several other things. Have had military experience. Am 25 years old, 5 feet 7, and weigh 140. Would like to go to South America.—Address W. D. TATRO, Trenholm, Ore.

WOULD like to join some band bound for adventure. Am an orphan 18 years old, 5 ft. 4½ in. tall in my stocking feet, and weigh about 128 pounds stripped. In good physical condition and am willing to do my share of work and to rough it. Would like to go on some adventure that there will be money in in the end, as I have my own way to make and not much money. Am working as an apprentice plumber and steam-fitter; have served very nearly a year at it. I am an American and I finish what I start into.—Address BYRON J. DARLING, JR., 254 West Main Street, Wabash, Ind.

WANT good, live fellow to join me on trip to Mexico or Central America. Am 26 years old, cheerful, and have traveled considerably. Some money.—Address VICTOR TALBOT, Box 343, Port Angeles, Wash.

BORN in Ireland but raised in the U. S. Merchant sailor four years. Prospected in Africa, Nevada, Alaska. Hunted big game in Africa and the Rocky Mountains of Canada and U. S. Fought in three revolutions. Am 30 years old, 6 ft. 1 in., weight 215 lbs. I am willing to go any place.—Address H. J. BURKE, Gen. Del., Calgary, Alta., Canada.

AM AN American, 20 years old, used to hardships. Been through the South and Canada. Experience as ship wireless operator. Handy at electricity and carpentry. Fair ventriloquist. Would like to join some expedition to the Amazon, or any inland water trip that promises excitement. Good references. Can not furnish any money, but will come for my board and what I can get out of the adventure.—Address CLIFFORD JACKSON, 162 East 36th Street, New York.

AM 23 years old; been in the Navy four years; was seaman, also a gun-pointer on a six-pound gun; can handle most any gun; good rifle and pistol shot. Was in Arizona one year trapping and cowpunching. Been a traveling salesman; also had a number of jobs and always made good; never have been fired. Was rewarded by President Roosevelt in 1906 for bravery. Good hand at anything. In show business one year. Can at any time give you proof. I have a good job here and will not leave unless I get a good adventure "job."—Address No. 84.

I'M A good engine-man—can run anything with a gasoline motor in it. Am a crank on firearms and a fair shot (spent two years at a military school where I learnt nothing but to shoot straight). Ready to try anything with a prospect of excitement and a fair chance to make a little of the coin of the realm. Providing it is on the level, and aboveboard in all ways.—Address No. 85.

ADVENTURE wanted. Started my career rather early, at the age of 17. Graduate of Kenyon Military Academy, roustabout on the *Ben Hur*, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Excellent discharge from U. S. A. as ranking corporal and sharpshooter. During service was in charge of Government telephone and telegraph lines at Niagara Falls. Likewise made army track-team. Served two years in Philippines; in line for commission at discharge. Cow-puncher one year in mountains of California. Moving-picture actor, salesman, guard on Nintah Indian Reserv., Utah, school-teacher, book-agent,

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interpreter, good government committee in a California city. Speak German, French, a little Spanish, Tagalog, and have a working knowledge of Latin. Likewise "wild-catted" for oil in the Lost Hills.

Am 25, light complexion and a native born American. Height 5 foot 10, weight 150 pounds. Have a working knowledge of engines and machine-guns. Can keep books and am fairly good at commissary work.—Address No. 81.

I HAVE already told the following comrade what I could in reply to his query, but many of you are able to add a great deal to it. I am sure he'll be deeply grateful for any sound pointers.

I CAME from a race of adventurers and soldiers. My great-grandfather fought in the Colonial and Revolutionary wars, my grandfather in the war of 1812, my own father was an officer in the Civil War on the Union side and after the War was commissioned Captain in the 6th U. S. Infantry. I myself am a graduate of one of the best military schools in the South, but owing to the loss of one of my eyes I have been debarred from military service in my own country. Do you think I could get a commission in the Brazilian Army? Kindly let me know how I could get into their service or give me any information you can in regard to it. I am in splendid physical condition and weigh 180 lbs., thirty-five years old.—Address No. 63.

HAVE been a soldier in the scout service in the Empire days down on old Samar, P. I.; have discovered an explosive that has twice the strength of sixty per cent. dynamite, which can be mixed and is ready for use in ten minutes, formula of which is so simple that a child can understand it and all the ingredients for same can be secured in any drug-store or physician's hand-case in any country in the world. Was for eleven months in charge of a company of provisional native Visayan Scouts out after old Lukban in 1901 and '02. Served for three months as brevet lieutenant in British North Borneo, Royal Dyac Police, Sandacan, B. N. Borneo. Understand handling men. Can speak Spanish fairly, a bit of German; thirty years old; in good health; a native Texan; white. Would like to go to South or Central America. Would prefer government service in some army willing to prove my explosive.—Address No. 79.

AGE 39. Resident Pacific Coast. Twenty-two years' telegraph and railroad experience in the United States and Mexico. Speak Spanish. Understand wireless telegraphy and can construct instruments. Would like to hear from propositions, preferably on this coast.—Address No. 78.

AM COLLEGE man; speak Spanish; a good mechanic and engineer (steam and gasoline); understand modern arms and ammunition; experienced in handling men; expert ocean navigator. Am willing to tackle anything in the way of an adventure which promises zest and excitement, but would prefer something having to do with the sea. 24 years of age and know how to take orders if necessary.—GEORGE F. MEARER, Wilmington, N. C.

TWO young men 28 years old want any kind of adventure. Not much experience, but able and used to taking care of ourselves anywhere. Don't care about any kind of chances, just so there's enough in it for expenses, though anything over will be welcome. Plenty of nerve and in good hard condition, ready to start anywhere.—Address No. 72.

WILL you ask the readers of the Camp-Fire if they have any use for me? I've done my best to get my share of adventure, but somehow always seemed to miss the best of the fun. I was with Colonel Green on his raids through northern Mexico, especially Sonora; at the sack of Juarez, and later under Madero himself. Am counted a good shot, indefatigable in the saddle. Have had some experience with machine-guns. Well read and well posted. Good education. Some knowledge of mechanics, expert on all things pertaining to small boats, good chauffeur. Have been line rider here in Arizona. Now working for local magazine and newspaper. Worked for some time in the woods of Northwestern Canada. Good cook.—Address No. 73.

TWO young Americans desire to make change —anything, anywhere, offering something out of the ordinary. Pay secondary consideration. No. 1 is at present in charge of a department with large corporation. No. 2 assistant foreman and gas-engine expert. Both well educated, in good physical condition and able to handle men or take orders, and not a bit particular on any point.—Address, No. 74.

THE following has to do with the cruise announced in the June "Camp-Fire":

Thanks to your "Camp-Fire" letter, I have secured several men for the cruise. And I have been busy answering letters, rich and poor. For instance one man wanted to charter the vessel for himself and friends, and several wanted to work their way. I have selected several poor fellows (who have been to sea) for part of the crew. Three letters a day is the average. What strikes me as peculiar is that they mostly write from Canada, New Mexico, Texas and Arizona.

Here are some further details about this cruise, for which some of our Camp-Fire comrades have already signed:

YOU who have signed on as part crew of the new round-the-world ship *Crusader* can get seven more men, and their total expense for the year will be $1000. The *Crusader*, built in Gloucester, is the acme of her type, the fisherman, but finished as a yacht, painted white (for the South Seas) with green waterline, and a broad gold band extending around her, tall tapering spars, snowy white canvas, rapid-fire guns mounted fore and aft. She looks her part—a vessel of "Adventure."

A stanch ship with a good skipper and crew. Two cooks. Sailing from Gloucester in November, 1913, we sail to Madeira, then follow down the West Coast of Africa, stopping at the Gold Coast, Ivory Coast, Cape Verde, Canary Islands, and Cape Town. Rounding the Cape of Good Hope,

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we enter the Indian Ocean, stopping at Madagascar and other islands. Ceylon, India, Penang, Java, Java Sea, Borneo, Coral Sea, and then the South Sea islands. We cruise clear across the Pacific, from island to island, visiting the Solomons, New Hebridies, Samoa, Fiji, Society, and many other small islands. Passing through the Panama Canal, we cruise through the West Indies and then home. Total distance 29,000 miles; time ashore about two hundred days. Camp-fire will receive extracts from the log of the *Crusador* on this cruise.—Address Wm. F. McCoy, Daytona, Fla.

AM A young man 27 years old, strong and healthy, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, weigh 150 lbs. Would like to join some expedition. Have no immoral, vicious habits, do not smoke or use tobacco in any form or alcoholic liquors of any kind, and I do not have anything to do with bad women and am not, aside from the Golden Rule, interested in politics. My religion is Theosophy. I would like to join some party exploring or anything that is good and clean. I like to be with clean men who know where, when and how to do things, and I will add that I hate the city with all of its artificiality.—Address No. 76.

CAN any one use a young Southerner who can use a rifle and keep his mouth shut? Will go anywhere in the world. All I ask is enough of the root of all evil to keep me till next time.—Address No. 75.

AM AN Englishman, having graduated abroad. Have been in the flooded districts of Ohio, working for the Red Cross Society. I am anxious for something more exciting. Have been in practise three years. Would like to get into something where adventure, honesty and education would be preferable. Address Dr. Frederick Norman Oddey, 141 Washington St., Dayton. Ohio.

AM LOOKING for some kind of adventure anywhere and any time. I am 19 years old; have no father or mother; have been traveling ever since I can remember and don't care two bits for my life as long as I get some excitement. I am strong and healthy and do not care for any of the "metal," but can be of service to any one. Always happy even in danger, and I would be happier than the happiest if you could dig up a little excitement for me. The sky is the limit.—Address No. 77.

LOST TRAILS

(*Continued from page* 2)

I WOULD like to hear from Frank Miller, John and Lee Crawford, who lived in Ennis, Texas, in 1892. Harvey Morris, Co. D, 22d Inft., Texas City, Tex.

WILL Fred Scott, a newspaper-man in the Fall of 1911 in Pennsylvania, last heard of in New Orleans, communicate with R. W. Coates, care of Adventure?

WM. F. MOLLENHAUER, JR., would like to communicate with Gordon Law.

Would also like to get in touch with Simon P. Culp. Address Wm. F. Mollenhauer, Jr., General Delivery, Owatonna, Minn.

WILL Charles Goolrick, who was discharged from the U. S. N. Hospital Corps at Norfolk in the Winter of 1902-3, advise an old shipmate of his address? Address Box 511, Johnstown, Pa.

SO THAT some of my old comrades may know of my whereabouts, I ask to be admitted to your Camp-Fire; for to-day I find myself half-blind, compelled to bid adieu to the roving life and only in memory live again through the wild scenes of my past life. There are no doubt some of my old shipmates and companions-in-arms who might drop me a line, should they hear of me through the Camp-Fire. F. E. Van Leue, Hornell, N. Y.

"ELLIOT, 1st Sergeant." Kindly give me full name and address. Editor Adventure.

I'D LIKE to hear from, or to know what has become of, these men who were in "E" and "C" Troops, B. S. A. P., stationed in and around Salisbury, at Hartley Hills, and New Fort Martin, Rhodesia, South Africa, in 1896-1897: A. S. O'Connor, Bob Ross, Jimmie Van Damme, Hans Kufeke, Jack Griffiths, Julian Harries, Jack Gardiner. Address W. E. Prickett, care Adventure.

WILL Edward J. Raeder, last heard of in Manila, P. I., communicate with Donald F. McGrew, care Adventure.

IF ANY one knows where Trafford Eckley Smith is, send word to the Australian he was down the Mediterranean with in 1899. Address Australian, care Adventure.

DICK MARTEL, who was in Hermosilla in 1887, write Wm. E. Saunders, Torresdale, Phila., Pa.

CHARLIE SCHAEFFER, who was in Sonora in 1887, write Wm. E. Saunders, Torresdale, Phila., Pa.

WORD wanted of George Dean, of Massachusetts, who sailed on the whaling-bark *Canton* in Hudson's Bay in 1893. Address Stephen A. Reynolds, care Adventure.

WISH to get into communication with Charlie Sutherland, late of Bechuanaland Police, Jameson Raid, Boer War, in charge Union Castle Line Dock at Cape Town. Address Talbot Mundy, care Adventure.

WILL Jack Prout, who was in Porcupine Camp in 1908, communicate with R. W. Coates, care of Adventure.

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